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THE ALDINE EDITION
OF THE BRITISH
POETS



THE POEMS OF COWPER
VOLUME I

Sicut aquæ tremulum labris ubi lumen ahenis
Sole repperctum, aut radiantis imagine lunæ,
Omnia pervolat late loca, jamque sub auras
Erigitur, summique ferit laquearia tecti.

VIRG. ÆN. VIII.

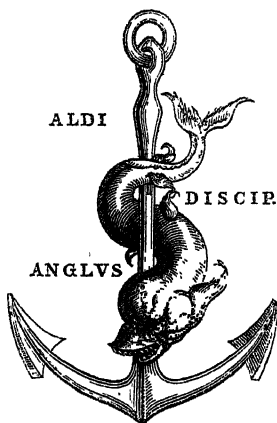
So water, trembling in a polish'd vase,
Reflects the beam that plays upon its face ;
The sportive light, uncertain where it falls,
Now strikes the roof, now flashes on the walls.



H Robinson sc

Wm Cowper.

THE POETICAL WORKS OF
WILLIAM COWPER
VOLUME I



LONDON
WILLIAM PICKERING
1830

LONDON :

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MEMOIR OF COWPER.

—Formed by Nature, as by Virtue form'd
To polish, to instruct, improve thy age :
To give to Poetry a sacred charm
Unfelt before,—and in one hallow'd theme,
To blend the Seraph's with the Poet's fire !

TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF COWPER.

WILLIAM COWPER was the eldest son of the Reverend John Cowper, Rector of Berkhamstead, in Hertfordshire, and was born at that place on the 15th of November, O. S. 1731. His family, which was ancient and respectable, was settled in Sussex in the reign of Edward the Fourth; and in 1641 Sir William Cowper was created a baronet, which dignity descended to his grandson, who left issue two sons. Sir William Cowper, the eldest, became Lord Keeper of the Great Seal to Queen Anne, by whom he was raised to the peerage, and by George the First was created Earl Cowper. Spenser Cowper, the Earl's younger brother, was bred to the bar, and was made Justice of the Common Pleas in 1727. He had three sons, namely, William Cowper,

Clerk of the House of Lords; John, the father of the Poet; and Ashley Cowper, a barrister, and one of the Clerks of Parliament, who left two daughters his coheirs, of whom Harriet was the wife of Sir Thomas Hesketh.

The Reverend John Cowper, the second son of Judge Cowper, was chaplain in ordinary to the King, and married Ann, daughter of Roger Donne, of Ludham Hall, in Norfolk, Esq. a descendant, it is said, of the celebrated Dr. Donne, and by her had WILLIAM, the Poet, a son named John, who took orders, and other children who died young.

When in his sixth year Cowper lost his mother, who died in childbed, in 1737, an event which is presumed to have had a fatal influence on his happiness through life. The filial tenderness with which he revered her memory was manifested many years afterwards, on receiving her portrait, and in the affecting lines which he addressed to it. That poem contains also a pleasing notice of his childhood, and of his remembrance of his early home.

Soon after his mother's death he was sent to the school of Dr. Pitman, at Market Street, in Hertfordshire.* In no instance was the error of not attending to the peculiar mental organization of a child before a particular plan of education

* Hayley; but Cowper himself says, in a Memoir of his Early Life, that he was then sent to a considerable school in Bedfordshire.—8vo, 2nd Edit. 1816.

was pursued more serious than in the case of Cowper. Possessed of a mind that shrunk from severity with a morbid sensitiveness, and endowed with faculties that required the most gentle culture to bring them to maturity, he was at once exposed to the discipline of a public school; and, as usual, was placed at the mercy of a stripling, who had purchased the right to be a tyrant by having first been a slave. "I was," he says, "singled out from all the other boys, by a lad about fifteen years of age, as a proper object upon whom he might let loose the cruelty of his temper, who, by his savage treatment of me, impressed such a dread of his figure upon my mind that I well remember being afraid to lift up my eyes upon him higher than his knees, and that I knew him by his shoe-buckles better than any other part of his dress." The boy's cruelty being at length discovered, he was expelled from the school, and Cowper was removed from it at the same time.

Whatever may be said of the advantages of a public school, no reasonable person will assert that the same system of education is desirable in every case, without reference to the constitution, or capacity of the child; for the absurdity of such an argument would only be exceeded by pretending that a delicate exotic, if exposed to the wintry winds of our northern climate, will flourish with the same vigour as under its native sky.

On quitting school he was placed under the care of an eminent surgeon and oculist for a complaint in his eyes, where he remained about twelve months, and was then sent to Westminster. He was at that time nine years of age, and even at this early period he was attacked with a depression of spirits, to which he became more or less the victim during the remainder of his life.

In 1749, being about eighteen, he left Westminster, and, after spending some months at home, was placed in the office of Mr. Chapman, an attorney, where he remained for three years, being intended for the law,—a pursuit chosen without the slightest regard to his fitness or inclination, and one for which nature had entirely disqualified him. Diffident, bashful, and solicitous to avoid observation, he was expected to rise in a profession requiring immediately opposite qualities.

He left the solicitor's office in his twenty-first year, and took chambers in the Middle Temple, of which society he was admitted a member on the 29th of April, 1748; and on the 14th of June, 1754, he was called to the bar. Three years afterwards, on the 15th of April, 1757, he removed from the Middle, to the Inner Temple, possibly to enable him to hold chambers of that Society; and about this period he obtained the situation of Commissioner of Bankrupts. But the law occupied little of his thoughts, for soon after he

settled in the Temple he was, he says, in a memoir written by himself, seized “with such a dejection of spirits as none but they who have felt the same can have the least conception of. Day and night I was upon the rack, lying down in horror, and rising up in despair. I presently lost all relish for those studies to which I had before been closely attached: the classics had no longer any charms for me; I had need of something more salutary than amusement, but I had no one to direct me where to find it. At length I met with Herbert’s Poems; and, gothic and uncouth as they are, I yet found in them a strain of piety which I could not but admire. This was the only author I had any delight in reading. I pored over him all day long; and though I found not in them what I might have found—a cure for my malady, yet it never seemed so much alleviated as while I was reading him. At length I was advised by a very near and dear relative to lay him aside, for he thought such an author more likely to nourish my disorder than to remove it. In this state of mind I continued near a twelvemonth; when, having experienced the inefficacy of all human means, I at length betook myself to God in prayer.”

A change of scene being recommended to him, he went to Southampton, where he spent several months; and soon after his arrival the weight of mental misery was suddenly removed, and he recovered his cheerfulness. The next twelve years of his life were spent in the Temple; not, how-

ever, in the study of jurisprudence, but in pursuits far more congenial to his elegant mind. Friendship, poesy, and love proved far more attractive, and to their charms he seems to have resigned himself. The fruits of his intercourse with the Muses were given to the world as the offsprings of others, and though happy in his friends, he was, from objection being made to his want of fortune, disappointed in his attachment to a fair cousin, who, it may be inferred, was the lady that afterwards married Sir Thomas Hesketh.

In July, 1756, Cowper lost his father, an event which does not appear to have affected him much; but a short poem which he addressed to the lady alluded to, in which he noticed the death of his intimate friend Sir William Russell, presents a gloomy picture of his situation :

“ Doom’d, as I am, in solitude to waste
The present moments, and regret the past ;
Deprived of every joy I valued most,
My friend torn from me, and my mistress lost ;
Call not this gloom I wear, this anxious mien,
The dull effect of humour, or of spleen !
Still, still I mourn, with each returning day,
Him snatch’d by fate, in early youth away.
And her, through tedious years of doubt and pain,
Fix’d in her choice, and faithful, but in vain !
O, prone to pity, generous, and sincere,
Whose eye ne’er yet refused the wretch a tear ;
Whose heart the real claim of friendship knows,
Nor thinks a lover’s are but fancied woes ;
See me, ere yet my destined course half done,
Cast forth a wanderer on a wild unknown !

See me neglected on the world's rude coast,
Each dear companion of my voyage lost !
Nor ask why clouds of sorrow shade my brow !
And ready tears wait only leave to flow !
Why all that soothes a heart, from anguish free,
All that delights the happy, palls with me ! ”

His intimate friends, whilst in the Temple, were persons who became more or less distinguished in literature, particularly Colman, Bonnel Thornton, and Lloyd ; and from his regard to the two first he contributed some papers to the *Connoisseur*, which they conducted. A sportive Epistle to Lloyd is printed among his miscellaneous pieces.

Like most other poets, Cowper's talents for versification displayed itself early, and the first production which is extant is part of an Ode on reading Sir Charles Grandison, which was written when he was very young.

Although always more or less the victim of hypochondriasis, which was at this time increased by the fear that as his patrimony was nearly exhausted he might be reduced to poverty, it was not until he was called upon to appear before the public that his infirmity assumed the character of madness. Upon this painful subject it is distressing to dwell, and as he has himself written the history of his calamity,* the details may with propriety be omitted.

In 1762 the office of Clerk of the Journals, as well

* *Memoir of the Early Life of Cowper*, written by himself. 12mo, 1816, 2d Edit.

as the situations of Reading Clerk, and Clerk of the Private Committees, in the House of Lords, appointments of considerable emoluments, became vacant; and his uncle, in whose gift they were, offered the two most profitable places to Cowper. "Dazzled," he observes, "by so splendid a proposal, he at once accepted it without reflecting upon his incapacity to execute an office of so public a nature; and the dread of appearing in so conspicuous a situation, induced him to exchange the appointments of Reading Clerk, and the Clerkship of the Private Committees for the less valuable one of Clerkship of the Journals. This sacrifice was not however attended with the result which he expected. His friend's right of nomination was opposed, and his nominee was threatened with a public examination at the bar of the house as to his fitness for the office. Cowper's feelings upon the occasion are best described in his own words:

"All the horror of my fears and perplexities now returned: a thunderbolt would have been as welcome to me as this intelligence. I knew, to demonstration, that upon these terms, the clerkship of the journals was no place for me. To require my attendance at the bar of the house, that I might there publicly entitle myself to the office, was, in effect, to exclude me from it. In the mean time, the interest of my friend, the causes of his choice, and my own reputation and circumstances, all urged me forward: all pressed

me to undertake that which I saw to be impracticable. They whose spirits are formed like mine, to whom a public exhibition of themselves, on any occasion, is mortal poison, may have some idea of the horror of my situation; others can have none. My continual misery at length brought on a nervous fever; quiet forsook me by day, and peace by night; a finger raised against me was more than I could stand against.

“In this posture of mind I attended regularly at the office; where, instead of a soul upon the rack, the most active spirits were essentially necessary to my purpose. I expected no assistance from any one there, all the inferior clerks being under the influence of my opponent; accordingly I received none. The journal books were indeed thrown open to me; a thing which could not be refused; and from which, perhaps, a man in health, and with a head turned to business, might have gained all the information he wanted. But it was not so with me. I read without perception, and was so distressed, that had every clerk in the office been my friend, it would have availed me little; for I was not in a condition to receive instruction, much less to elicit it out of manuscripts without direction. Many months went over me thus employed; constant in the use of means, despairing as to the issue. The feelings of a man, when he arrives at the place of execution, are, probably, much as mine were every time I set my foot in the office, which was every day for more than half a year together.”

He availed himself of the vacation to recruit his spirits by a visit to Margate, where he withdrew his thoughts from the prospect which distressed him. "About the beginning of October, 1763," he proceeds, "I was again required to attend the office, and to prepare for the push. This no sooner took place, than all my misery returned. Again I visited the scene of ineffectual labours; again I felt myself pressed by necessity on either side, with nothing but despair in prospect. To this dilemma was I reduced, either to keep possession of the office to the last extremity, and by so doing, expose myself to a public rejection for insufficiency; (for the little knowledge I had acquired would have quite forsaken me at the bar of the House,) or else to fling it up at once, and by this means, run the hazard of ruining my benefactor's right of appointment, by bringing his discretion into question. In this situation, such a fit of passion has sometimes seized me, when alone in my chambers, that I have cried out aloud, and cursed the hour of my birth; lifting up my eyes to heaven, at the same time, not as a suppliant, but in the hellish spirit of rancorous reproach, and blasphemy against my Maker."

It would be painful to follow him further in his description of his wretchedness, and it is sufficient to state, that as his day of trial approached, he looked with eager hope to losing his senses, that he might avoid appearing at the bar of the house of Lords; but being disappointed in his expectation, despair made him contemplate self-destruction as

the only escape from his misery. His brother, who was a clergyman, and some other friends, endeavoured to soothe him by spiritual consolation, but in vain; and in a violent paroxysm of his disease he suddenly lost his reason. After consulting with his family, his brother resolved to place him at St. Albans, under the care of Dr. Cotton, who kept a house for insane patients, and to the skill and humanity of that gentleman he owed his recovery after a seclusion of several months. The chief symptom of his disorder was a conviction of his unworthiness in reference to religion; "a sense," to use his own expression, "of self-loathing and abhorrence, united to a fear of instantaneous judgment. Cowper continued with Dr. Cotton about eighteen months; and as his views of religion were still tinctured with fanaticism, he refused to return to London on account of its profligacy; and that he might not be tempted to do so by pecuniary considerations, he resigned his Commissionership of Bankrupts, by which he reduced his income to an amount scarcely adequate to his maintenance.

At the suggestion of his brother, he removed, in June 1765, to Huntingdon; and from that time Cowper may almost be considered his own biographer, in consequence of his voluminous correspondence, in which he mentions every thing in which he was concerned. His letters, which have long been before the world, are highly appreciated; and copious extracts from such of them as throw

light upon his character, his pursuits, his opinions, or which elucidate his history, will be introduced into this Memoir.

He had not been many months at Huntingdon, before he became known to the family of the Rev. William Unwin, the lecturer of two churches in that town; and such was the mutual pleasure which the acquaintance produced, that Cowper became a permanent inmate with them. Mr. Unwin's establishment consisted of his wife—the Mary of the Poet—his son who entered into holy orders, and a daughter. His first letter, after his arrival in Huntingdon, was addressed to Joseph Hill, Esq., an intimate friend who managed his pecuniary affairs, dated on the 24th June 1765, in which he informed him that he was restored to perfect health both of mind and body; and in October he thus spoke of the Unwins:

“ I have added another family to the number of those I was acquainted with, when you were here. Their name is Unwin—the most agreeable people imaginable; quite sociable, and as free from the ceremonious civility of country gentlefolks as any I ever met with. They treat me more like a near relation than a stranger, and their house is always open to me. The old gentleman carries me to Cambridge in his chaise. He is a man of learning and good sense, and as simple as Parson Adams. His wife has a very uncommon understanding, has read much to excellent purpose, and is more polite than a duchess. The son,

who belongs to Cambridge, is a most amiable young man, and the daughter quite of a piece with the rest of the family. They see but little company, which suits me exactly; go when I will, I find a house full of peace and cordiality in all its parts, and am sure to hear no scandal, but such discourse instead of it, as we are all the better for. You remember Rousseau's description of an English morning; such are the mornings I spend with these good people, and the evenings differ from them in nothing, except that they are still more snug, and quieter. Now I know them, I wonder that I liked Huntingdon so well before I knew them, and am apt to think, I should find every place disagreeable, that had not an Unwin belonging to it."

In March 1766, he observed in a letter to his cousin, Mrs. Cowper, of Park House, near Hertford: "I have great reason, my dear Cousin, to be thankful to the gracious Providence, that conducted me to this place. The lady, in whose house I live, is so excellent a person, and regards me with a friendship so truly Christian, that I could almost fancy my own mother restored to life again, to compensate to me for all the friends I have lost, and all my connexions broken. She has a son at Cambridge in all respects worthy of such a mother, the most amiable young man I ever knew. His natural and acquired endowments are very considerable, and as to his virtues, I need only say, that he is a Christian. It ought

to be a matter of daily thanksgiving to me, that I am admitted into the society of such persons, and I pray God to make me, and keep me, worthy of them."

It appears from the following description of the manner in which he passed his time, that he was encouraged in that religious abstraction from the world, by the habits of the family with which he resided. From the last paragraph, it is manifest that Cowper had entertained an idea of taking orders, and that his mind was entirely absorbed by spiritual considerations :

" I am obliged to you for the interest you take in my welfare, and for your inquiring so particularly after the manner in which my time passes here. As to amusements, I mean what the world calls such, we have none: the place indeed swarms with them, and cards and dancing are the professed business of almost all the gentle inhabitants of Huntingdon. We refuse to take part in them, or to be accessaries to this way of murdering our time, and by so doing have acquired the name of Methodists. Having told you how we do not spend our time, I will next say how we do. We breakfast commonly between eight and nine; till eleven, we read either the Scripture, or the Sermons of some faithful preacher of these holy mysteries: at eleven we attend Divine Service, which is performed here twice every day, and from twelve to three we separate, and amuse ourselves as we please.

During that interval I either read in my own apartment, or walk, or ride, or work in the garden. We seldom sit an hour after dinner, but if the weather permits, adjourn to the garden, where with Mrs. Unwin, and her son, I have generally the pleasure of religious conversation till tea time. If it rains, or is too windy for walking, we either converse within doors, or sing some Hymns of Martin's collection, and by the help of Mrs. Unwin's harpsichord make up a tolerable concert, in which our hearts, I hope, are the best and most musical performers. After tea we sally forth to walk in good earnest. Mrs. Unwin is a good walker, and we have generally travelled about four miles before we see home again. When the days are short, we make this excursion in the former part of the day, between church time and dinner. At night we read and converse as before, till supper, and commonly finish the evening either with hymns, or a sermon, and last of all, the family are called to prayers.—I need not tell you, that such a life as this is consistent with the utmost cheerfulness, accordingly we are all happy, and dwell together in unity as brethren. Mrs. Unwin has almost a maternal affection for me, and I have something very like a filial one for her, and her son and I are brothers. Blessed be the God of our Salvation for such companions, and for such a life, above all for a heart to like it.

“ I have had many anxious thoughts about

taking Orders, and I believe every new convert is apt to think himself called upon for that purpose ; but it has pleased God, by means which there is no need to particularize, to give me full satisfaction as to the propriety of declining it : indeed they who have the least idea of what I have suffered from the dread of public exhibitions, will readily excuse my never attempting them hereafter. In the mean time, if it please the Almighty, I may be an instrument of turning many to the truth in a private way, and hope that my endeavours in this way have not been entirely unsuccessful. Had I the zeal of Moses, I should want an Aaron to be my spokesman."

The happiness of the family with which he was domesticated sustained a severe blow in June 1767, by the death of Mr. Unwin, who was thrown from his horse, and died within a few days. This event did not dissolve their little society, as he continued to reside with his widow ; but they removed to Olney, in Buckinghamshire, in October the same year, their motive for selecting that place, being a desire to live near the Rev. John Newton, who evinced much sympathy for Mrs. Unwin's situation. For many years after Cowper came to Olney, religion was the principal, if not the exclusive, subject of his thoughts. Excepting that he occasionally indulged his taste for a garden, and in mechanical labour, all his time was given to writing hymns, to prayer meetings, or in spiritual conversations with Mr. Newton,

whose opinions appear very closely to have resembled the Poet's; and an intimacy arose which was only terminated by death. It can scarcely be doubted that this intercourse fostered Cowper's mental infirmity. All his letters at that period shew how entirely it was engrossed by one object, and form a remarkable contrast to the playfulness by which his subsequent correspondence is distinguished. The letter which he wrote to Mrs. Cowper is a sufficient exemplification of this remark:

“ MY DEAR COUSIN,

“ I HAVE not been behind hand in reproaching myself with neglect, but desire to take shame to myself for my unprofitableness in this, as well as in all other respects. I take the next immediate opportunity however of thanking you for yours, and of assuring you that instead of being surprised at your silence, I rather wonder that you, or any of my friends, have any room left for so careless and negligent a correspondent in your memories. I am obliged to you for the intelligence you send me of my kindred, and rejoice to hear of their welfare. He who settles the bounds of our habitations has at length cast our lot at a great distance from each other, but I do not therefore forget their former kindness to me, or cease to be interested in their well being. You live in the centre of a world I know you do not delight in. Happy are you, my dear friend, in

being able to discern the insufficiency of all i can afford, to fill and satisfy the desires of an immortal soul. That God who created us for the enjoyment of himself has determined in mercy that it shall fail us here, in order that the blessed result of all our inquiries after happiness in the creature may be a warm pursuit, and a close attachment to our true interest, in fellowship and communion with Him, through the name and mediation of a dear Redeemer. I bless his goodness and grace that I have any reason to hope I am a partaker with you in the desire after better things, than are to be found in a world polluted with sin, and therefore devoted to destruction. May he enable us both to consider our present life in its only true light, as an opportunity put into our hands to glorify him amongst men, by a conduct suited to his word and will. I am miserably defective in this holy and blessed art, but I hope there is at the bottom of all my sinful infirmities a sincere desire to live just so long as I may be enabled, in some poor measure, to answer the end of my existence in this respect, and then to obey the summons, and attend him in a world where they who are his servants here shall pay him an un sinful obedience for ever. Your dear mother is too good to me, and puts a more charitable construction upon my silence than the fact will warrant. I am not better employed than I should be in corresponding with her. I have that within which hinders me wretch-

edly in every thing that I ought to do, but is prone to trifle, and let time, and every good thing run to waste. I hope however to write to her soon.

“ My love and best wishes attend Mr. Cowper, and all that inquire after me. May God be with you to bless you, and do you good by all his dispensations; don't forget me when you are speaking to our best Friend before his mercy seat.

“ Yours ever, W. COWPER.

“ N.B. I am not married.”

The postscript was intended to contradict a rumour which was circulated, that Cowper had married Mrs. Unwin; and as she was not more than ten years older than himself, nothing but their exemplary characters prevented the connexion from being viewed with suspicion. All his biographers have attributed their attachment to friendship, excepting one, who states that Cowper intended to marry her; that the recurrence of his malady alone prevented it; and that he repeatedly declared, that if he ever entered a church again, it would be for the purpose of making her his wife.*

In March 1770, Cowper lost his brother, the Reverend John Cowper, to whose affectionate

* Memoir of Cowper, by the Rev. S. Greathead, prefixed to an edition of his poems, 16mo. 1816.

care he was much indebted during his illness at St. Albans, and whose loss he deeply deplored. The Poet did homage to his worth both in prose and verse, and the following lines must be familiar to his readers :

I had a Brother once :
Peace to the memory of a man of worth !
A man of letters, and of manners too !
Of manners, sweet as virtue always wears,
When gay good humour dresses her in smiles !
He graced a college, in which order yet
Was sacred, and was honour'd, loved, and wept
By more than one, themselves conspicuous there.

Towards the end of the year, 1770, Cowper again experienced a return of his calamity, which Hayley says produced a chasm in his correspondence of ten years; but this is not strictly correct, for though he may have suffered to some extent from 1770 to 1773, it was not until the last mentioned year that his complaint rendered him incapable of writing. This is evident from the statement of Hayley himself, as he says, that until that time, he assisted Newton in writing the *Olney Hymns*; and some letters from him to Mr. Hill, dated in August 1771, and June, July, and November, 1772, have been published.* Though these letters shew that he was then suffering from a heavy depression of spirits, they

* *Private Correspondence of Cowper*, edited by Dr. Johnson, 2 vols. 8vo. 1824.

afford no indication of insanity. The latest of them was dated on the 5th November, 1772 :

“ Believe me, my dear friend, truly sensible of your invitation, though I do not accept it. My peace of mind is of so delicate a constitution, that the air of London will not agree with it. You have my prayers, the only return I can make you, for your many acts of still-continued friendship. If you should smile, or even laugh at my conclusion, and I were near enough to see it, I should not be angry, though I should be grieved. It is not long since I should have laughed at such a recompense myself. But glory be to the name of Jesus, those days are past, and, I trust, never to return !”

Early in 1773, however, he experienced a severe paroxysm of despondency, and required all the zeal and tender firmness which he found in Mrs. Unwin. That admirable woman watched over him with the skill of a physician and the endearing kindness of a mother. For three years the sufferings of the patient and the vigilance of his nurse were extraordinary ; but towards the end of the year 1776 Mrs. Unwin had the happiness to find her solicitude fully repaid by his gradual recovery. With that gentleness and tact which only a woman knows how to display, she gradually drew his mind from the subject that had overwhelmed it ; and until he was sufficiently restored to take pleasure in literary pursuits, he found amusement in taming

some hares. His success he has himself described, and one of the group is immortalized in "The Task." In November, 1776, Cowper resumed his correspondence with Mr. Hill, and that letter, simple as it is, shews a wonderful improvement in the state of his mind. From that time his correspondence is marked by humour and playfulness, without any allusion to those solemn considerations to which every thing had hitherto given place. Hayley passes over the period between 1776 and 1780 in a few words, and has not given any of his letters until the latter year. The deficiency is, however, supplied by the Collection edited by Dr. Johnson, where his correspondence with Mr. Hill occurs. It related chiefly to literature, and contains Cowper's criticism on various books which Hill had lent him.

In January 1778, he wrote to Mr. Hill in reference to his pecuniary affairs: "I shall be glad if you will let me know whether I am to understand by the sorrow you express, that any part of my former supplies is actually cut off, or whether they are only more tardy in coming in, than usual. It is useful even to the rich, to know, as nearly as may be, the exact amount of their income; but how much more so to a man of my small dimensions. If the former should be the case, I shall have less reason to be surprised, than I have to wonder at the continuance of them so long. Favours are favours indeed, when laid

out upon so barren a soil, where the expense of sowing is never accompanied by the smallest hope of return. What pain there is in gratitude, I have often felt; but the pleasure of requiting an obligation has always been out of my reach."

In April in that year, he thus noticed the death of Sir Thomas Hesketh, the husband of his amiable cousin, who it seems bequeathed him a legacy: "Poor Sir Thomas! I knew that I had a place in his affections, and from his own information, many years ago, a place in his will; but little thought that after the lapse of so many years I should still retain it. His remembrance of me, after so long a season of separation, has done me much honour, and leaves me the more reason to regret his decease."

Great part of Cowper's time was, at this period, spent in reading aloud to Mrs. Unwin; but his garden, in which he took great delight, and manual occupations also amused him. Early in 1780, his friend, Mr. Newton, removed to London, where he obtained the living of St. Mary, Woolnoth.

The state of Cowper's feelings are so well described in two letters from him to Mrs. Cowper, the one dated 20th July, 1780, and the other on the 31st of the next month, that it is impossible to resist making some extracts from them:

"You see me sixteen years older, at the least, than when I saw you last; but the effects of time

seem to have taken place rather on the outside of my head than within it. What was brown has become gray, but what was foolish remains foolish still. Green fruit must rot before it ripens, if the season is such as to afford it nothing but cold winds and dark clouds, that interrupt every ray of sunshine. My days steal away silently, and march on (as poor mad King Lear would have made his soldiers march), as if they were shod with felt; not so silently but that I hear them, yet were it not that I am always listening to their flight, having no infirmity that I had not when I was much younger, I should deceive myself with an imagination that I am still young.

“ I am fond of writing, as an amusement, but I do not always find it one. Being rather scantily furnished with subjects, that are good for any thing, and corresponding only with those, who have no relish for such as are good for nothing; I often find myself reduced to the necessity, the disagreeable necessity, of writing about myself. This does not mend the matter much, for though in a description of my own condition, I discover abundant materials to employ my pen upon, yet as the task is not very agreeable to me, so I am sufficiently aware, that it is likely to prove irksome to others. A painter who should confine himself in the exercise of his art to the drawing of his own picture, must be a wonderful coxcomb, if he did not soon grow sick of his occupation,

and be peculiarly fortunate, if he did not make others as sick as himself." "Your time of life is comparatively of a youthful date. You may think of Death as much as you please (you cannot think of it too much); but I hope you will live to think of it many years.

"It costs me not much difficulty to suppose that my friends who were already grown old, when I saw them last, are old still; but it costs me a good deal sometimes to think of those who were at that time young, as being older than they were. Not having been an eye witness of the change that time has made in them, and my former idea of them not being corrected by observation, it remains the same; my memory presents me with this image unimpaired, and while it retains the resemblance of what they were, forgets that by this time the picture may have lost much of its likeness, through the alteration that succeeding years have made in the original. I know not what impressions time may have made upon your person, for while his claws (as our Grannams called them) strike deep furrows in some faces, he seems to sheath them with much tenderness, as if fearful of doing injury to others. But though an enemy to the person, he is a friend to the mind, and you have found him so. Though even in this respect his treatment of us depends upon what he meets with at our hands; if we use him well, and listen to his admonitions, he is a friend indeed, but otherwise the worst of enemies,

who takes from us daily something that we valued, and gives us nothing better in its stead. It is well with them, who like you can stand a tip toe on the mountain top of human life, look down with pleasure upon the valley they have passed, and sometimes stretch their wings in joyful hope of a happy flight into Eternity. Yet a little while, and your hope will be accomplished."

With the exception of fugitive pieces, which he sent in his letters to his correspondents, his muse had as yet produced nothing; and though he was now in his forty-ninth year, not the slightest indications were put forth of his becoming a regular author. In October, 1779, he forwarded to Hill his verses entitled, "The Pine Apple and the Bee," written a few weeks before that gentleman received his lines on the promotion of Lord Thurlow, on which occasion Cowper observed:

"Your approbation of my last Heliconian present encourages me to send you another. I wrote it, indeed, on purpose for you; for my subjects are not always such as I could hope would prove agreeable to you. My mind has always a melancholy cast, and is like some pools I have seen, which, though filled with a black and putrid water, will nevertheless, in a bright day, reflect the sunbeams from their surface."

On sending Mr. Hill an enigma in July, 1780, he thus adverted to his habitual dejection: "My enigma will probably find you out, and you will find out my enigma at some future time. I am

not in a humour to transcribe it now. Indeed I wonder that a sportive thought should ever knock at the door of my intellects, and still more that it should gain admittance. It is as if harlequin should intrude himself into the gloomy chamber where a corpse is deposited in state. His antic gesticulations would be unseasonable at any rate, but more especially so if they should distort the features of the mournful attendants into laughter. But the mind long wearied with the sameness of a dull, dreary prospect, will gladly fix its eyes on any thing that may make a little variety in its contemplations, though it were but a kitten playing with her tail."

From that dejection, however, nothing so effectually raised his spirits as poetry. Of this he was fully sensible, when he remarked to Mr. Newton, in December in the same year :

"At this season of the year, and in this gloomy uncomfortable climate, it is no easy matter for the owner of a mind like mine to divert it from sad subjects, and to fix it upon such as may administer to its amusement. Poetry, above all things, is useful to me in this respect. While I am held in pursuit of pretty images, or a pretty way of expressing them, I forget every thing that is irksome, and, like a boy that plays truant, determine to avail myself of the present opportunity to be amused, and to put by the disagreeable recollection that I must, after all, go home and be whipt again. It will not be long, perhaps, before you

will receive a poem, called the Progress of Error. That will be succeeded by another, in due time, called Truth. Don't be alarmed. I ride Pegasus with a curb. He will never run away with me again. I have even convinced Mrs. Unwin that I can manage him, and make him stop when I please."

This was the first notification to Mr. Newton of his intention to appear as an author, and when he found that Mr. Hill was apprised of his design, he expressed the greatest surprise; but gave him the following account of his motive:

"My labours are principally the production of the last winter; all, indeed, except a few of the minor pieces. When I can find no other occupation, I think, and when I think, I am very apt to do it in rhyme. Hence it comes to pass that the season of the year which generally pinches off the flowers of poetry, unfolds mine, such as they are, and crowns me with a winter garland. In this respect, therefore, I and my cotemporary bards are by no means upon a par. They write when the delightful influences of fine weather, fine prospects, and a brisk motion of the animal spirits make poetry almost the language of nature; and I, when icicles depend from all the leaves of the Parnassian laurel, and when a reasonable man would as little expect to succeed in verse, as to hear a black-bird whistle. This must be my apology to you for whatever want of fire and animation you may observe in what you will

shortly have the perusal of. As to the public, if they like me not, there is no remedy."

It was chiefly at the request of Mrs. Unwin that Cowper was induced to undertake a poetical piece of any extent. Affection is lynx-eyed in discovering whatever is beneficial to its object, and in pressing upon her friend an occupation for which nature had peculiarly adapted him, she displayed considerable judgment. The "Progress of Error" was suggested by her as his theme, and in treating on it, he says his sole object was to be useful. The Preface was written by Mr. Newton, at that gentleman's special desire, and the volume was published in 1783; but it was for some time treated with neglect, and it was not until his subsequent productions established his reputation that the beauties of his earlier pieces began to be appreciated.

The next subject which engaged his attention was his Poem entitled "Truth;" but before he had fairly transcribed it for press, he commenced "Expostulation;" and in a letter to Mr. Newton, in March, 1781, he says: "If a Board of Inquiry were to be established, at which poets were to undergo an examination respecting the motives that induced them to publish, and I were to be summoned to attend, that I might give an account of mine, I think I could truly say, what perhaps few poets could, that though I have no objection to lucrative consequences, if any such should follow, they are not my aim; much less is it my

ambition to exhibit myself to the world as a genius. What then, says Mr. President, can possibly be your motive? I answer with a bow—Amusement. There is nothing but this—no occupation within the compass of my small sphere, Poetry excepted—that can do much towards diverting that train of melancholy thoughts, which, when I am not thus employed, are for ever pouring themselves in upon me. And if I did not publish what I write, I could not interest myself sufficiently in my own success, to make an amusement of it.”

Early in July, 1781, Cowper formed an acquaintance with Lady Austen, a woman of considerable talents and accomplishments, who possessed great influence over him, and, for some time, added much to the happiness of his retirement. To her the world is mainly indebted for “The Task,” “Johnny Gilpin,” and for the translation of Homer, a circumstance which entitles her to be specially commemorated in a life of the Poet. Lady Austen* was the widow of Sir Robert Austen, Baronet, and paying a visit to her sister Mrs. Jones, the wife of a clergyman, who lived at Clifton, Cowper observed her at a shop in Olney. He was so struck with her appearance

* Her maiden name was Richardson. She married Sir Robert Austen very early in life, and passed some years in France. Her ladyship subsequently married a Mons. De Tardif, a French gentleman, of poetical talents, and died at Paris on the 12th of August, 1802.

that he requested Mrs. Unwin to make her acquaintance, which soon ripened into intimacy, and she was afterwards always designated by him as his "Sister Anne." Speaking of her first visit, in a letter dated July 7, 1781, he says :

"Lady Austen, waving all forms, has paid us the first visit ; and not content with showing us that proof of her respect, made handsome apologies for her intrusion. We returned the visit yesterday. She is a lively agreeable woman ; has seen much of the world, and accounts it a great simpleton, as it is. She laughs and makes laugh, and keeps up a conversation without seeming to labour at it."

On the 12th of July he wrote the following humorous letter to Mr. Newton, which is printed entire for the first time :

" MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

" I AM going to send, what when you have read, you may scratch your head, and say, I suppose, there's nobody knows, whether what I have got, be verse or not:—by the tune and the time, it ought to be rhyme, but if it be, did you ever see, of late or of yore, such a ditty before? The thought did occur, to me and to her, as Madam and I, did walk not fly, over hills and dales, with spreading sails, before it was dark, to Weston Park.

" The news at *Oney*, is little or noney, but such as it is, I send it, viz. Poor Mr. Peace,

cannot yet cease, addling his head, with what you said, and has left parish church, quite in the lurch, having almost sworn, to go there no more.

“ Page and his wife, that made such a strife, we met them twain, in Dog lane,* we gave them the wall, and that was all. For Mr. Scot, we have seen him not, except as he pass’d, in a wonderful haste, to see a friend, in Silver end,† Mrs. Jones proposes, e’er July closes, that she and her sister, and her Jones Mister, and we that are here, our course shall steer, to dine in the Spinney,‡ but for a guinea, if the weather should hold, so hot and so cold, we had better by far, stay where we are. For the grass there grows, while nobody mows (which is very wrong) so rank and long, that so to speak, ’tis at least a week, if it happens to rain, e’er it dries again.

“ I have writ Charity, not for popularity, but as well as I cou’d, in hopes to do good; and if the reviewer, should say, ‘to be sure, the gentleman’s muse wears Methodist shoes, you may know by her pace, and talk about grace, that she and her bard, have little regard for the taste and fashions, and ruling passions, and hoydening play of the modern day; and though she assume a borrowed plume, and now and then wear a tittering air, ’tis only her plan to catch if she can, the giddy and gay, as they go

* Close by Cowper’s house at Olney.

† A lane adjoining Cowper’s house.

‡ Sir J. Throckmorton’s.

that way, by a production on a new construction : She has baited her trap, in hopes to snap all that may come, with a sugar-plumb.'—His opinion in this will not be amiss ; 'tis what I intend my principal end, and if I succeed, and folks should read, till a few are brought to a serious thought, I shall think I am paid, for all I have said, and all I have done, though I have run, many a time, after a rhyme, as far from hence, to the end of my sense, and, by hook or crook, write another book, if I live and am here, another year.

“ I have heard before of a room with a floor laid upon springs, and such like things, with so much art, in every part, that when you went in, you was forced to begin a minuet pace, with an air and a grace, swimming about, now in, and now out, with a deal of state, in a figure of eight, without pipe or string, or any such thing ; and now I have writ, in a rhyming fit, what will make you dance, and as you advance, will keep you still, though against your will, dancing away, alert and gay, till you come to an end of what I have penn'd ; which that you may do, ere Madam and you, are quite worn out, with jiggling about, I take my leave ; and here you receive a bow profound, down to the ground, from your humble me—

W. C.

“ P. S. When I concluded, doubtless you did think me right, as well you might, in saying what

I said of Scot, and then it was true, but now it is due, to Him to note, that since I wrote, Himself and He has visited we."

He was at this time employed on his poem on Charity, which he considered would be a proper sequel to "Hope;" and on the 22nd of the same month he told Mr. Newton he was "in the middle of an affair called 'Conversation,' which, as 'Table Talk' serves, in the present volume, by way of introductory fiddle to the band that follows, I design shall perform the same office in a second."

Neither constant occupation nor society was capable of entirely removing Cowper's constitutional dejection of spirits; and though his letters at this period evince much cheerfulness, and occasionally sportive vivacity, the seeds of his malady were far from eradicated. To Mr. Newton, in August, 1781, he observed: "My thoughts are clad in a sober livery, for the most part as grave as that of a bishop's servant's. They turn too upon spiritual subjects, but the tallest fellow, and the loudest amongst them all, is he who is continually crying, with a loud voice, *Actum est de te, periisti*. You wish for more attention, I for less. Dissipation itself would be welcome to me, so it were not a vicious one; but however earnestly invited, it is coy, and keeps at a distance. Yet with all this distressing gloom upon my mind, I experience, as you do, the slipperiness of the present hour, and the rapidity

with which time escapes me. Every thing around us, and every thing that befalls us, constitutes a variety, which, whether agreeable or otherwise, has still a thievish propensity, and steals from us days, months, and years, with such unparalleled address, that even while we say they are here, they are gone. From infancy to manhood is rather a tedious period, chiefly, I suppose because at that time we act under the control of others, and are not suffered to have a will of our own. But thence downward into the vale of years, is such a declivity, that we have just an opportunity to reflect upon the steepness of it, and then find ourselves at the bottom."

About this time Lady Austen became the tenant of the parsonage in Olney: as it communicated by a door in the garden wall with the Poet's residence, a constant intercourse subsisted between the two families; and they dined alternately with each other. Her Ladyship's musical acquirements induced Cowper to write several songs for her, and for three years his happiest hours were spent in her society.

His letters to Mr. Newton, in the autumn of 1781, related chiefly to the publication of his Poems, and their progress through the press. Of "Retirement" he gave him the subjoined account:

"I have already begun and proceeded a little way in a poem called Retirement. My view in choosing that subject is to direct to the proper use of the opportunities it affords for the cultiva-

tion of a man's best interests ; to censure the vices and the follies which people carry with them into their retreats, where they make no other use of their leisure than to gratify themselves with the indulgence of their favourite appetites, and to pay themselves, by a life of pleasure, for a life of business. In conclusion, I would enlarge upon the happiness of that state, when discreetly enjoyed and religiously improved. But all this is, at present, in embryo. I generally despair of my progress when I begin ; but if, like my travelling 'squire, I should kindle as I go, this likewise may make a part of the volume, for I have time enough before me."

Cowper was peculiarly fortunate in having a publisher who, to the habits of a man of business, united considerable critical judgment and good taste. Since literature has degenerated into a mere calculation of profit and loss, publishers of this class have nearly become extinct, but of the valuable assistance which an intelligent bookseller may afford to an author, no one is more aware than the writer of the Memoirs which are prefixed to this, and the preceding volumes of the present edition of the Poets.

Cowper repeatedly expresses to Mr. Newton and others his acknowledgments for his publisher Mr. Johnson's suggestions ; and the following letters to him, which have not before been printed, still farther evince the poet's obligations :

TO MR. JOHNSON.

SIR,

I AM obliged to you for your queries, the poems will be the better for them. I wish you always to read me with the closest attention and to give my lines as strict a scrutiny as you can find time for : some things always escape a writer, which yet strike a judicious reader perhaps at the first view ; and while you allow me a right of decision in the last instance, if I go into public with any uncorrected faults upon my head, the blame and the disgrace will be all my own. You will perceive that I have made some use of the liberty I stipulated for beforehand, and though I have followed your advice in several passages, yet not in all. I proceed according to previous engagements to give my reasons.

No man living abhors a louse more than I do, but hermits are notoriously infested with these vermin ; it is even a part of their supposed meritorious mortification to encourage the breed ; the fact being true becomes an important feature in the face of that folly I mean to expose, and having occasion to mention the loathsome animal, I cannot, I think, do better than call him by his loathsome name. It is a false delicacy that is offended by the mention of any thing God has seen fit to create, where the laws of modesty are not violated, and therefore we will not mind it.

Die *then*. The word italicised to direct the

emphasis, the objection to that line I suppose must vanish, at least I can see none, the sentiment I take to be unquestionably true. I confess the two lines that close the period are two of my favourites, they may possibly at first sight seem chargeable with some harshness of expression, but that harshness is rather to be ascribed to the truth they convey, than to the terms in which it is conceived; every body knows that a final rejection of the Gospel must terminate in destruction; the words damnable and damned may be vehement indeed, but they are no more than adequate to the case, nor would any other words that I can think of do justice to the idea they intend; that vehemence is indeed the very circumstance that gives them a peculiar propriety in the place they occupy, they bring up the rear of a whole clause of admonitions and cautions, and therefore cannot make too forcible an impression, they are the lead at the end of the bludgeon.

You may draw on me when you please for about eight hundred lines, I have just finished a poem of that length, which I intended should take the lead in a second volume, upon proper encouragement to print again. But if you choose to begin with Table Talk and end with Conversation (for that is the title of it), I have no objection: the last bears no affinity to the first except in the name of it.

Olney, August 6, 1781.

TO MR. JOHNSON, BOOKSELLER.

SIR,

I RETURN the copy always by the first opportunity, though sometimes I may seem to detain it longer than necessary. We have the post but three times a week. Mr. Newton writes me word he has received 'Conversation,' which, therefore, I suppose will soon pay its respects to you. I am now writing, but whether what I write will be ready for the present volume, should you choose to insert it, I know not. I never write except when I can do it with facility, and am rather apprehensive that the muse is about to forsake me for the present; ever since I could use a pen I have been subject to such vicissitudes.

September 3, 1781.

I have corrected no mistakes but my own.

In a letter to Johnson, dated Feb. 17, 1782, he says, "I now reckon the book finished, and therefore once for all and very unfeignedly return you my thanks for the many useful hints you have given me; and if I were to prefix an advertisement to the reader, would most willingly acknowledge myself indebted to my bookseller as my very judicious, and only corrector."

There is much novelty in Cowper's opinion of music, as conveyed in a letter to Mr. Newton, in September, 1781: "The lawfulness of music,

when used with moderation, and in its proper place, is unquestionable; but I believe that wine itself, though a man be guilty of habitual intoxication, does not more debauch and befool the natural understanding, than music, always music, music in season and out of season, weakens and destroys the spiritual discernment. If it is not used with an unfeigned reference to the worship of God, and with a design to assist the soul in the performance of it, which cannot be the case when it is the only occupation, it degenerates into a sensual delight, and becomes a most powerful advocate for the admission of other pleasures, grosser perhaps in degree, but in their kind the same."

Cowper's observations upon the Ocean, which occur in a letter, dated September, 1781, are extremely poetical: "I think with you, that the most magnificent object under heaven is the great deep; and cannot but feel an unpolite species of astonishment, when I consider the multitudes that view it without emotion, and even without reflection. In all its various forms, it is an object of all others the most suited to affect us with lasting impressions of the awful Power that created and controls it. I am the less inclined to think this negligence excusable, because at a time of life when I gave as little attention to religious subjects as almost any man, I yet remember that the waves would preach to me, and that in the midst of dissipation I had an ear to hear them.

One of Shakespeare's characters says, 'I am never merry when I hear sweet music.' The same effect that harmony seems to have had upon him, I have experienced from the sight and sound of the ocean, which have often composed my thoughts into a melancholy not displeasing, nor without its use."

In the autumn of 1782 Cowper wrote the popular ballad of Johnny Gilpin, which originated in the following circumstance. With the hope of diverting his mind during an unusually severe attack of gloom, Lady Austen related to him the history of the renowned citizen, which she had heard in her childhood. The tale made a vivid impression, and the next morning he told her that the ludicrous incident had convulsed him with laughter during the night, and that he had embodied the whole into a ballad. It was first printed anonymously in the Public Advertiser; and Henderson, the comedian, having recited it in public, with the humorous expression of which it is susceptible, the poem soon attained the popularity it still enjoys. In a letter dated on the 4th November in that year, to Mr. Unwin, Cowper observed in reference to the ballad:

"You tell me that John Gilpin made you laugh tears, and that the ladies at court are delighted with my Poems. Much good may they do them! May they become as wise as the writer wishes them, and they will be much happier than he! I know there is in the book that

wisdom which cometh from above, because it was from above that I received it. May they receive it too! For whether they drink it out of the cistern, or whether it falls upon them immediately from the clouds as it did on me, it is all one. It is the water of life, which whosoever drinketh shall thirst no more. As to the famous horseman above-mentioned, he and his feats are an inexhaustible source of merriment. At least we find him so, and seldom meet without refreshing ourselves with the recollection of them. You are perfectly at liberty to deal with them as you please. *Auctore tantum anonymo imprimantur*; and when printed send me a copy."

Alluding to a fever with which he was attacked in August, 1783, Cowper remarked that wine never had any effect upon his head, and that a fever did not render him in any degree delirious, excepting when it was of a highly dangerous nature, facts as anomalous as many others, in relation to his physical and mental constitution. His correspondence, in the years 1782 and 1783, treated chiefly of religious topics and politics, and contains comparatively few allusions to himself. It is manifest, from the following passage in a letter in November, 1782, that his situation, in relation to exterior circumstances, was one of happiness and contentment; and, but for the occasional attacks of his mental infirmity, that his lot was an enviable one:

"I lead the life I always wished for; and,

the single circumstance of dependence excepted, (which, between ourselves, is very contrary to my predominant humour and disposition), have no want left broad enough for another wish to stand upon."

Indications of the presence of his malady are sometimes perceptible even in the most cheerful of his letters, and the conclusion of one, on miscellaneous subjects, to Mr. Newton, in February, 1783, is in these remarkable words; "We truly love you both, think of you often, and one of us prays for you:—*the other will, when he can pray for himself.*" The state of his mind, in April following, is thus beautifully, but affectingly described:

"My device was intended to represent, not my own heart, but the heart of a Christian, mourning and yet rejoicing, pierced with thorns, yet wreathed about with roses. I have the thorn without the rose. My brier is a wintry one, the flowers are withered, but the thorn remains. My days are spent in vanity, and it is impossible for me to spend them otherwise. No man upon earth is more sensible of the unprofitableness of a life like mine than I am, or groans more heavily under the burthen; but this too is vanity, because it is in vain; my groans will not bring the remedy, because there is no remedy for me. The time when I seem to be most rationally employed is when I am reading."

His view of his spiritual state was so wretched,

that, for many years, he thought himself unworthy of going to church, or of addressing the Almighty in prayer. This appears in the fragment of a curious letter written to Mr. Unwin in May, 1783:

“They that have found a God, and are permitted to worship him, have found a treasure, of which, highly as they may prize it, they have but very scanty and limited conceptions. Take my word for it,—the word of a man singularly well qualified to give his evidence in this matter, who having enjoyed the privilege some years, has been deprived of it more, and has no hope that he shall live to recover it. These are my Sunday morning speculations,—the sound of the bells suggested them, or rather, gave them such an emphasis that they forced their way into my pen, in spite of me; for, though I do not often commit them to paper, they are never absent from my mind.”

In September following he observes :

“I have been lately more dejected and more distressed than usual; more harassed by dreams in the night, and more deeply poisoned by them in the following day. I know not what is portended by an alteration for the worse, after eleven years of misery; but firmly believe that it is not designed as the introduction of a change for the better. I now see a long winter before me, and am to get through it as I can. I know the ground before I tread upon it. It is hollow; it is agitated; it suffers shocks in every direction; it is

like the soil of Calabria—all whirlpool and undulation. But I must reel through it ; at least, if I be not swallowed up by the way.”

In this strain does he frequently advert to himself ; but in the early part of 1783, Lady Austen strove to allure him from his reflections by calling his poetic talents again into action, and urged him to try his powers in blank verse. After repeated solicitations, he promised, if she would suggest a subject, he would comply with her request. “ Oh,” she replied, “ you can never be in want of a subject, you can write upon any : write upon this sofa.” Such was the origin of “ The Sofa.” As soon as it was completed he commenced the other pieces which form “ The Task,” and he was occupied upon the contents of that volume until September 1784, when it was sent to press. His next piece was the *Tirocinium*, of which he gave the following account in a letter, in November, 1784 :

“ The Task, as you know, is gone to the press : since it went I have been employed in writing another poem, which I am now transcribing, and which, in a short time, I design shall follow. It is intituled, *Tirocinium*, or a Review of Schools : the business and purpose of it are, to censure the want of discipline, and the scandalous inattention to morals, that obtain in them, especially in the largest ; and to recommend private tuition as a mode of education preferable on all accounts ; to call upon fathers to become tutors of their own

sons, where that is practicable; to take home a domestic tutor where it is not; and if neither can be done, to place them under the care of such a man as he to whom I am writing; some rural parson, whose attention is limited to a few."

It has been well observed, that the year 1784 was an eventful one in Cowper's life, not only from his having completed "the Task," and commenced the translation of Homer, but from his losing the society of Lady Austen. The cause of the interruption to their friendship is glossed over with Mr. Hayley's usual skill, nor have either of the other biographers of the poet explained the circumstance. There can be no doubt that Mrs. Unwin became jealous of the influence which that lady possessed over him, and he was reduced to the alternative of sacrificing his intimacy with one of them. To his credit he did not permit the fascinating qualities of her Ladyship to outweigh the claims of services and friendship, but wrote a farewell letter to her, explaining the painful circumstances which obliged him to renounce her society. Hayley says, Lady Austen confirmed him in his opinion, that a more admirable letter could not have been written, but admirable as it was, it wounded her feelings so much as to induce her to destroy it. From that moment they met no more; and as the materials have been suppressed, which would elucidate the history of this unfortunate affair, no speculations on the subject will be hazarded. "The Task" appeared in

1785, and its author presented a copy to the Lord Chancellor Thurlow, and another personage, with both of whom he was intimate in early life. Neither of them acknowledged the gift, and the circumstance excited the Poet's resentment to such a degree, that he alluded to it with some bitterness in a future production.

In February, 1784, he described himself in a manner which applies to many other literary persons : " The morning is my writing time, and in the morning I have no spirits. So much the worse for my correspondents. Sleep, that refreshes my body, seems to cripple me in every other respect. As the evening approaches I grow more alert, and, when I am retiring to bed, am more fit for mental occupation than at any other time. So it fares with us whom they call nervous. By a strange inversion of the animal economy, we are ready to sleep when we have most need to be awake, and go to bed just when we might sit up to some purpose. The watch is regularly wound up, it goes in the night when it is not wanted, and in the day stands still."

Cowper's reverence for the memory of his mother has been already adverted to, but it is so pleasingly shewn in a letter of condolence to Mr. Hill on the death of that gentleman's parent in November, 1784, that it would be improper to omit it : " To condole with you on the death of a mother aged eighty-seven would be absurd ; rather, therefore, as is reasonable, I congratulate you on

the almost singular felicity of having enjoyed the company of so amiable and so near a relation so long. Your lot and mine, in this respect, have been very different, as indeed in almost every other. Your mother lived to see you rise, at least to see you comfortably established in the world. Mine dying when I was six years old, did not live to see me sink in it. You may remember with pleasure, while you live, a blessing vouchsafed to you so long, and I while I live must regret a comfort of which I was deprived so early. I can truly say, that not a week passes (perhaps I might with equal veracity say a day) in which I do not think of her. Such was the impression her tenderness made upon me, though the opportunity she had for shewing it was so short. But the ways of God are equal; and when I reflect on the pangs she would have suffered had she been a witness of all mine, I see more cause to rejoice than to mourn that she was hidden in the grave so soon."

Perhaps the following explanation of the notice of Bishop Bagot ought to form a note to the Poem on Public Schools: it places Cowper's love of justice in a strong light, and it would be unjust to him to pass it over:

"I intended in my last to have given you my reasons for the compliment that I paid Bishop Bagot, lest, knowing that I have no personal connection with him, you should suspect me of having done it at rather too much at a venture. In the first place, then, I wished the world to know

that I have no objection to a bishop, *quid* bishop. In the second place, the brothers were all five my schoolfellows, and very amiable and valuable boys they were. Thirdly, Lewis, the bishop, had been rudely and coarsely treated in the Monthly Review, on account of a sermon which appeared to me, when I read their extract from it, to deserve the highest commendations, as exhibiting explicit proof of both his good sense and his unfeigned piety. For these causes, me thereunto moving, I felt myself happy in an opportunity to do public honour to a worthy man, who had been publicly traduced."

There is much playful sarcasm upon the manner in which persons in an elevated station sometimes treat their inferiors in a letter which he wrote to Mr. Unwin in March, 1785: "I was pleased too, to see my opinion of his Lordship's *nonchalance* upon a subject that you had so much at heart, completely verified. I do not know that the eye of a nobleman was ever dissected. I cannot help supposing, however, that were that organ, as it exists in the head of such a personage, to be accurately examined, it would be found to differ materially in its construction from the eye of a commoner; so very different is the view that men in an elevated and in an humble station have of the same object. What appears great, sublime, beautiful, and important to you and to me, when submitted to my Lord, or his Grace, and submitted too with the utmost

humility, is either too minute to be visible at all, or, if seen, seems trivial and of no account."

In tracing Cowper's career from his letters, a painful duty is continually forced upon his biographer of noticing the occasional presence of that calamity which lay like an incubus upon his spirits. To have introduced all the allusions to the subject which occur in his correspondence would have needlessly wounded the reader's feelings, but the existence of that malady forms part of the Poet's history, and its occurrence, force, and duration, must necessarily be sometimes adverted to. It would be curious, were it possible, to examine the verses which were composed when the cloud was darkest with those which were written when he was free from the obscurity. In May, 1785, he says, in a letter to Mr. Newton,

"I am sensible of the tenderness and affectionate kindness with which you recollect our past intercourse, and express your hopes of my future restoration. I too, within the last eight months, have had my hopes, though they have been of short duration, cut off, like the foam upon the waters. Some previous adjustments, indeed, are necessary, before a lasting expectation of comfort can have place in me. There are those persuasions in my mind which either entirely forbid the entrance of hope, or, if it enter, immediately eject it. They are incompatible with any such inmate, and must be turned out themselves before so desirable a guest can possibly have secure possession. This you

say will be done. It may be, but it is not done yet ; nor has a single step in the course of God's dealings with me been taken towards it. If I mend, no creature ever mended so slowly that recovered at last. I am like a slug or snail that has fallen into a deep well : slug as he is, he performs his descent with an alacrity proportioned to his weight : but he does not crawl up again quite so fast. Mine was a rapid plunge ; but my return to daylight, if I am indeed returning, is leisurely enough."

A description of the place in which the greater part of the works of a favourite author were composed is interesting :

" I write in a nook that I call my Boudoir. It is a summer-house not much bigger than a sedan-chair, the door of which opens into the garden, that is now crowded with pinks, roses, and honey-suckles, and the window into my neighbour's orchard. It formerly served an apothecary, now dead, as a smoking-room ; and under my feet is a trapdoor, which once covered a hole in the ground where he kept his bottles. At present, however, it is dedicated to sublimer uses. Having lined it with garden-mats, and furnished it with a table and two chairs, here I write all that I write in summer time, whether to my friends or to the public. It is secure from all noise, and a refuge from all intrusion ; for intruders sometimes trouble me in the winter evenings at Olney. But (thanks to my Boudoir !) I can now hide myself

from them. A poet's retreat is sacred. They acknowledge the truth of that proposition, and never presume to violate it."

To the appearance of the second volume of his Poems, Cowper was indebted for a renewal of his friendship with his cousin Lady Hesketh. After her marriage she lived some time abroad, which, with other circumstances, interrupted their intercourse for many years, but the perusal of "The Task" recalled him to her memory, and she wrote him a very kind letter. In his reply, written in October, 1785, after expressing the delight which her communication had occasioned him, he said,

"I can truly boast of an affection for you, that neither years, nor interrupted intercourse, have at all abated. I need only recollect how much I valued you once, and with how much cause, immediately to feel a revival of the same value; if that can be said to revive, which at the most has only been dormant for want of employment, but I slander it when I say that it has slept. A thousand times have I recollected a thousand scenes, in which our two selves have formed the whole of the drama, with the greatest pleasure; at times, too, when I had no reason to suppose that I should ever hear from you again. I have laughed with you at the Arabian Nights Entertainment, which afforded us, as you well know, a fund of merriment that deserves never to be forgot. I have walked with you to Netley Abbey, and have scrambled with you over hedges in every direc-

tion, and many other feats we have performed together, upon the field of my remembrance, and all within these few years. Should I say within this twelvemonth, I should not transgress the truth. The hours that I have spent with you were among the pleasantest of my former days, and are therefore chronicled in my mind so deeply, as to feel no erasure.

“ My dear Cousin, dejection of spirits, which, I suppose, may have prevented many a man from becoming an author, made me one. I find constant employment necessary, and therefore take care to be constantly employed. Manual occupations do not engage the mind sufficiently, as I know by experience, having tried many. But composition, especially of verse, absorbs it wholly. I write, therefore, generally three hours in a morning, and in an evening I transcribe. I read also, but less than I write, for I must have bodily exercise, and therefore never pass a day without it.”

Cowper's next letter to her, dated on the 9th of November following, is important, as it shows that Lady Hesketh had benevolently offered to increase his pecuniary resources :

“ My benevolent and generous Cousin, when I was once asked if I wanted any thing, and given delicately to understand that the inquirer was ready to supply all my occasions, I thankfully and civilly, but positively, declined the favour. I neither suffer, nor have suffered, any

such inconveniences as I had not much rather endure than come under obligations of that sort to a person comparatively with yourself a stranger to me. But to you I answer otherwise. I know you thoroughly, and the liberality of your disposition, and have that consummate confidence in the sincerity of your wish to serve me, that delivers me from all awkward constraint, and from all fear of trespassing by acceptance. To you, therefore, I reply, yes. Whensoever and whatsoever, and in what manner soever you please; and add moreover, that my affection for the giver is such as will increase to me tenfold the satisfaction that I shall have in receiving. It is necessary, however, that I should let you a little into the state of my finances, that you may not suppose them more narrowly circumscribed than they are. Since Mrs. Unwin and I have lived at Olney, we had but one purse, although during the whole of that time, till lately, her income was nearly double mine. Her revenues indeed are now in some measure reduced, and do not much exceed my own; the worst consequence of this is, that we are forced to deny ourselves some things which hitherto we have been better able to afford, but they are such things as neither life, nor the well being of life, depend upon. My own income has been better than it is, but when it was best, it would not have enabled me to live as my connexions demanded that I should, had it not been combined with a better than itself, at least at this

end of the kingdom. Of this I had full proof during three months that I spent in lodgings at Huntingdon, in which time, by the help of good management, and a clear notion of economical matters, I contrived to spend the income of a twelvemonth. Now, my beloved Cousin, you are in possession of the whole case as it stands. Strain no points to your own inconvenience or hurt, for there is no need of it, but indulge yourself in communicating (no matter what) that you can spare without missing it, since by so doing you will be sure to add to the comforts of my life one of the sweetest that I can enjoy—a token and proof of your affection.”

During the whole of the year 1785 Cowper was occupied upon the translation of Homer, and his letters prove that he was fully sensible of the magnitude of the effort. His mind was indeed nearly absorbed with the subject, and whatever may be the opinion of his success, no one can doubt that he taxed his powers to the uttermost to deserve it. The motive which induced him to undertake so Herculean a task was, he informed Mr. Newton in December, 1785, accidental :

“For some weeks after I had finished the Task, and sent away the last sheet corrected, I was through necessity idle, and suffered not a little in my spirits for being so. One day, being in such distress of mind as was hardly supportable, I took up the Iliad ; and merely to divert attention, and with no more preconception of

what I was then entering upon, than I have at this moment of what I shall be doing this day twenty years hence, translated the twelve first lines of it. The same necessity pressing me again, I had recourse to the same expedient, and translated more. Every day bringing its occasion for employment with it, every day consequently added something to the work ; till at last I began to reflect thus :—The Iliad and the Odyssey together consist of about forty thousand verses. To translate these forty thousand verses will furnish me with occupation for a considerable time. I have already made some progress, and I find it a most agreeable amusement. Homer, in point of purity, is a most blameless writer ; and, though he was not an enlightened man, has interspersed many great and valuable truths throughout both his poems. In short, he is in all respects a most venerable old gentleman, by an acquaintance with whom no man can disgrace himself. The literati are all agreed to a man, that, although Pope has given us two pretty poems under Homer's titles, there is not to be found in them the least portion of Homer's spirit, nor the least resemblance of his manner. I will try, therefore, whether I cannot copy him somewhat more happily myself. I have at least the advantage of Pope's faults and failings, which, like so many buoys upon a dangerous coast, will serve me to steer by, and will make my chance for success more probable. These, and many other considerations, but espe-

cially a mind that abhorred a vacuum as its chief bane, impelled me so effectually to the work, that ere long I mean to publish proposals for a subscription to it, having advanced so far as to be warranted in doing so."

Intense occupation had not, however, the effect of totally banishing the enemy to his peace of mind. In May, 1786, when the revisal of the *Iliad* for the press employed every moment of his time, he told Mr. Newton, "Within this hour arrived three sets of your new publication,* for which we sincerely thank you. We have breakfasted since they came, and consequently, as you may suppose, have neither of us had yet an opportunity to make ourselves acquainted with the contents. I shall be happy (and when I say that, I mean to be understood in the fullest and most emphatical sense of the word) if my frame of mind shall be such as may permit me to study them. But Adam's approach to the tree of life, after he had sinned, was not more effectually prohibited by the flaming sword that turned every way, than mine to its great Antetype has been now almost these thirteen years, a short interval of three or four days, which passed about this time twelvemonth, alone excepted. For what reason it is that I am thus long excluded, if I am ever again to be admitted, is known to God only. I can say but this: that if he is still my Father, this paternal severity has, toward me, been such

* Messiah.

as that I have reason to account it unexampled. For though others have suffered desertion, yet few, I believe, for so long a time, and perhaps none a desertion accompanied with such experiences. But they have this belonging to them: that as they are not fit for recital, being made up merely of infernal ingredients, so neither are they susceptible of it; for I know no language in which they could be expressed. They are as truly things which it is not possible for man to utter, as those were which Paul heard and saw in the third heaven. If the ladder of Christian experience reaches, as I suppose it does, to the very presence of God, it has nevertheless its foot in the abyss. And if Paul stood, as no doubt he did, in that experience of his to which I have just alluded, on the topmost round of it, I have been standing, and still stand on the lowest, in this thirteenth year that has passed since I descended. In such a situation of mind, encompassed by the midnight of absolute despair, and a thousand times filled with unspeakable horror, I first commenced an author. Distress drove me to it; and the impossibility of subsisting without some employment, still recommends it. I am not, indeed, so perfectly hopeless as I was; but I am equally in need of an occupation, being often as much, and sometimes even more, worried than ever. I cannot amuse myself, as I once could, with carpenters' or with gardeners' tools, or with squirrels and guinea-pigs. At that time I was a child. But

since it has pleased God, whatever else he withholds, to restore to me a man's mind, I have put away childish things. Thus far, therefore, it is plain that I have not chosen or prescribed to myself my own way, but have been providentially led to it; perhaps I might say, with equal propriety, compelled and scourged into it: for certainly, could I have made my choice, or were I permitted to make it even now, those hours which I spend in poetry I would spend with God. But it is evidently his will that I should spend them as I do, because every other way of employing them he himself continues to make impossible. If, in the course of such an occupation, or by inevitable consequence of it, either my former connexions are revived, or new ones occur, these things are as much a part of the dispensation as the leading points of it themselves; the effect, as much as the cause. If his purposes in thus directing me are gracious, he will take care to prove them such in the issue; and, in the mean time, will preserve me (for he is able to do that in one condition of life as in another) from all mistakes in conduct that might prove pernicious to myself, or give reasonable offence to others. I can say it as truly as it was ever spoken,—Here I am: let him do with me as seemeth him good."

He was visited by Lady Hesketh at Olney, and at her suggestion he was induced to remove to the village of Weston in November following. Few

of Cowper's pieces are better known than "the Rose," which is associated with the recollections of our earliest childhood. The authorship of this poem being claimed by a lady, he informed Lady Hesketh of the circumstance which produced it:

"I could pity the poor woman who has been weak enough to claim my song. Such pilferings are sure to be detected. I wrote it, I know not how long, but I suppose four years ago. The Rose in question was a Rose given to Lady Austen by Mrs. Unwin, and the incident that suggested the subject occurred in the room in which you slept at the vicarage, which Lady Austen made her dining-room. Some time since Mr. Bull going to London I gave him a copy of it, which he undertook to convey to Nichols, the printer of the Gentleman's Magazine. He showed it to a Mrs. C——, who begged to copy it, and promised to send it to the printer's by her servant. Three or four months afterwards, and when I had concluded it was lost, I saw it in the Gentleman's Magazine with my signature, W. C. Poor simpleton! She will find now perhaps that the Rose had a thorn, and that she has pricked her fingers with it."

A lady of the name of King sought a correspondence with the poet in 1788, and at her request he was induced to give her the following amusing account of his pursuits before he became an author:

“There was a time, but that time was before I commenced writer for the press, when I amused myself in a way somewhat similar to yours; allowing, I mean, for the difference between masculine and female operations. The scissors and the needle are your chief implements; mine were the chisel and the saw. In those days you might have been in some danger of too plentiful a return for your favours. Tables, such as they were, and joint-stools such as never were, might have travelled to Perton-hall in most inconvenient abundance. But I have long since discontinued this practice, and many others which I found it necessary to adopt, that I might escape the worst of all evils, both in itself and in its consequences—an idle life. Many arts I have exercised with this view, for which nature never designed me; though among them were some in which I arrived at considerable proficiency, by mere dint of the most heroic perseverance. There is not a 'squire in all this country who can boast of having made better squirrel-houses, hutches for rabbits, or bird-cages, than myself; and in the article of cabbage-nets I had no superior. I even had the hardiness to take in hand the pencil, and studied a whole year the art of drawing. Many figures were the fruit of my labours, which had, at least, the merit of being unparalleled by any production either of art or nature. But before the year was ended, I had occasion to wonder at the progress that may be made, in despite of natural deficiency,

by dint alone of practice ; for I actually produced three landscapes, which a lady thought worthy to be framed and glazed. I then judged it high time to exchange this occupation for another, lest, by any subsequent productions of inferior merit, I should forfeit the honour I had so fortunately acquired. But gardening was, of all employments, that in which I succeeded best; though even in this I did not suddenly attain perfection. I began with lettuces and cauliflowers : from them I proceeded to cucumbers ; next to melons. I then purchased an orange-tree, to which, in due time, I added two or three myrtles. These served me day and night with employment during a whole severe winter. To defend them from the frost, in a situation that exposed them to its severity, cost me much ingenuity and much attendance. I contrived to give them a fire heat ; and have waded night after night through the snow, with the bellows under my arm, just before going to bed, to give the latest possible puff to the embers, lest the frost should seize them before morning. Very minute beginnings have sometimes important consequences. From nursing two or three little evergreens, I became ambitious of a green-house, and accordingly built one ; which, verse excepted, afforded me amusement for a longer time than any expedient of all the many to which I have fled for refuge from the misery of having nothing to do."

It was scarcely possible without exceeding the

necessary limits of this memoir to insert extracts from Cowper's letters on political subjects, and had it been possible, remarks on events of only temporary interest, however important the subject or clever the observations, would not be acceptable to readers, when the affairs adverted to have become mere matter of history. That he was a staunch whig is apparent from a letter written to Lady Hesketh in March, 1790: "I am neither Tory nor High Churchman, but an old Whig, as my Father was before me: and an enemy, consequently, to all tyrannical impositions."

A distant relation of the Poet, through his mother, a Mr. Johnson, and who subsequently took Orders, and has distinguished himself as the ablest of his biographers, inspired him with great affection. His letters to that gentleman, who was then a very young man, are among the most pleasing of his correspondence. There is much warmth of heart in the following, written in March, 1790:

"My boy. I long to see thee again. It has happened, some way or other, that Mrs. Unwin and I have conceived a great affection for thee. That I should is the less to be wondered at, because thou art a shred of my own mother; neither is the wonder great that she should fall into the same predicament, for she loves every thing that I love. You will observe that your own personal right to be beloved makes no part of the consideration. There is nothing that I touch with so much

tenderness as the vanity of a young man ; because I know how extremely susceptible he is of impressions that might hurt him in that particular part of his composition. If you should ever prove a coxcomb, from which character you stand just now at a greater distance than any young man I know, it shall never be said that I have made you one ; no, you will gain nothing by me but the honour of being much valued by a poor poet, who can do you no good while he lives, and has nothing to leave you when he dies. If you can be contented to be dear to me on these conditions, so you shall ; but other terms more advantageous than these, or more inviting, none have I to propose. Farewell. Puzzle not yourself about a subject when you write to either of us ; every thing is subject enough from those we love."

In May in that year the Laureat died, and Lady Hesketh offered Cowper all her interest to get him nominated his successor. His reply indicates either that he was little influenced by ambition, or that he entertained a low opinion of the proposed distinction.

" The Lodge, May 28, 1790.

" MY DEAREST COZ,

" I THANK thee for the offer of thy best services on this occasion. But Heaven guard my brows from the wreath you mention, whatever wreath beside may hereafter adorn them ! It would be a leaden extinguisher, clapped on all the fire of my genius, and I should never more produce a line worth

reading. To speak seriously, it would make me miserable, and therefore I am sure that thou, of all my friends, wouldst least wish me to wear it.

“ Adieu, ever thine—in Homer-hurry,

“ W. C.”

There is so much good sense in the advice which he gave to his young kinsman, Mr. Johnson on the subject of academical distinctions, that it cannot be too widely circulated. How many young men are there who make University honors the goal of their ambition, and imagine that the fame which is produced by distinguishing themselves at College, is sufficient for the rest of their lives, and of whom consequently no more is known !

“ You never pleased me more than when you told me you had abandoned your mathematical pursuits. It grieved me to think that you were wasting your time merely to gain a little Cambridge fame, not worth your having. I cannot be contented that your renown should thrive no where but on the banks of the Cam. Conceive a nobler ambition, and never let your honor be circumscribed by the paltry dimensions of a University !”

In July in that year he informed Mr. Johnson that he had finished the *Iliad*. Like Pope, he was accustomed to write parts of it on scraps of paper and backs of letters, as appears from a letter

to Mrs. King, in which he enclosed his translation of some Latin letters by a Dutch clergyman at the Cape of Good Hope, which were published in 1792 :

“ I have hardly a scrap of paper belonging to me that is not scribbled over with blank verse ; and taking out your letter from a bundle of others, this moment, I find it thus inscribed on the seal side.

———— meantime his steeds

Snorted, by Myrmidons detain'd, and loosed
From their own master's chariot, foam'd to fly.

You will easily guess to what they belong ; and I mention the circumstance merely in proof of my perpetual engagement to Homer, whether at home or abroad ; for when I committed these lines to the back of your letter, I was rambling at a considerable distance from home. I set one foot on a mole-hill, placed my hat with the crown upward on my knee, laid your letter upon it, and with a pencil wrote the fragment that I have sent you. In the same posture I have written many and many a passage of a work which I hope soon to have done with. But all this is foreign to what I intended when I first took pen in hand. My purpose then was, to excuse my long silence as well as I could, by telling you that I am at present not only a labourer in verse, but in prose also, having been requested by a friend, to whom I could not refuse it, to translate for him a series

of Latin letters received from a Dutch minister of the gospel at the Cape of Good Hope. With this additional occupation you will be sensible that my hands are full; and it is a truth that, except to yourself, I would, just at this time, have written to nobody."

The principal reference in his correspondence, in 1790, to his mental ailment, is in a letter to Mr. Newton, in October:

"The only consolation left me on this subject is, that the voice of the Almighty can in one moment cure me of this mental infirmity. That He can, I know by experience; and there are reasons for which I ought to believe that He will. But from hope to despair is a transition that I have made so often, that I can only consider the hope that may come, and that sometimes I believe will, as a short prelude of joy to a miserable conclusion of sorrow that shall never end. Thus are my brightest prospects clouded, and thus to me is hope itself become like a withered flower, that has lost both its hue and its fragrance."

Few authors will dispute the justice of the following remark on the unwillingness of the Universities to patronize literature by applying part of their funds to the purchase of books:

"You have not, I hope, forgot to tell Mr. Frog,* how much I am obliged to him for his kind, though unsuccessful attempt in my favour at Oxford. It seems not a little extraordinary that

* His familiar designation of his friend Mr. Throckmorton.

persons so nobly patronized themselves, on the score of literature, should resolve to give no encouragement to it in return. Should I find a fair opportunity to thank them hereafter, I will not neglect it.

“ Could Homer come himself, distress’d and poor,
And tune his harp at Rhedicina’s door,
The rich old vixen would exclaim, I fear,
‘ Begone! no tramper gets a farthing here.’ ”

In another letter Cowper says, the answer of the University of Oxford to the request was, “ that they subscribe to nothing ! ”

The translation of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, on which he bestowed five years, was published in two quarto volumes, in July, 1791. The *Iliad* was inscribed to his kinsman, Earl Cowper, and the *Odyssey* was dedicated to the Dowager Lady Spencer, who has shown him many marks of kindness. Success was not, however, the immediate reward of his toil, and the revisions which he made for the second edition were attended by scarcely less labour than the original composition.

Cowper had learnt from experience that intense literary application was the only remedy for his malady, and soon after his translation of Homer appeared, he gladly accepted the proposition of his publisher to superintend a new and splendid edition of Milton’s works, with notes and a translation of his Latin and Italian Poems. This undertaking accidentally produced him the acquaintance of Hayley, who was then engaged on

a Life of that Poet. A correspondence commenced, and the greatest intimacy was in a very short time the result: before they had ever seen each other, Cowper told him in a letter dated in April, 1792:

“God grant that this friendship of ours may be a comfort to us all the rest of our days, in a world where true friendships are rarities, and especially where suddenly formed they are apt soon to terminate! But, as I said before, I feel a disposition of heart toward you, that I never felt for one whom I had never seen; and that shall prove itself, I trust, in the event a propitious omen.”

In the next month, Hayley paid a visit to Weston, and was received with the warmest regard, but his reception is best described in his own words, because they afford a graphic idea of Cowper's home:

“Our meeting, so singularly produced, was a source of reciprocal delight. We looked cheerfully forward to the unclouded enjoyment of many social and literary hours. My host, though now in his sixty-first year, appeared as happily exempt from all the infirmities of advanced life as friendship could wish him to be: and his more elderly companion, not materially oppressed by age, discovered a benevolent alertness of character that seemed to promise a continuance of their domestic comfort. Their reception of me was kindness itself. I was enchanted to find that the manners and conversation of Cowper resem-

bled his poetry,—charming by unaffected elegance, and the graces of a benevolent spirit. I looked with affectionate veneration and pleasure on the lady who, having devoted her life and fortune to the service of this tender and sublime genius, in watching over him with maternal vigilance through many years of the darkest calamity, appeared to be now enjoying a reward justly due to the noblest exertions of friendship, in contemplating the health and the renown of the poet whom she had the happiness to preserve. It seemed hardly possible to survey human nature in a more touching and a more satisfactory point of view.”

During this visit a heavy calamity befell Cowper, by Mrs. Unwin being seized with paralysis; and his letters are full of the consolation which he derived from the sympathy and kindness of Hayley.

A letter which he wrote at this period to his publisher on the subject of his edition of Milton is now published for the first time :

DEAR SIR,

Weston Underwood,
July 8, 1792.

Truditur dies die,
Novæque pergunt interire lunæ.

DAYS, weeks, and months escape me, and nothing is done, nor is it possible for me to do any thing that demands study and attention in the present state of our family. I am the electrician; I am the escort into the garden; I am wanted, in short,

on a hundred little occasions that occur every day in Mrs. Unwin's present state of infirmity; and I see no probability that I shall be less occupied in the same indispensable duties for a long time to come. The time fixed in your proposals for publication meanwhile steals on; and I have lately felt my engagement for Milton bear upon my spirits with a pressure which, added to the pressure of some other private concerns, is almost more than they are equal to. Tell me if you expect to be punctual to your assignation with the public, and that the artists will be ready with their part of the business so soon as the spring of 94? I cannot bear to be waited for, neither shall I be able to perform my part of the work with any success if I am hunted; and I ask this question thus early lest my own distress should increase, and should ultimately prove a distress to you. My translations are finished, and when I have finished also the revisal of them, will be, I believe, tolerably well executed. They shall be heartily at your service, if by this unhappy interception my time should be so shortened as to forbid my doing more.

Your speedy answer will oblige yours affectionately,

WM. COWPER.

“There is one Richard Coleman in the world, whom I have educated from an infant, and who is utterly good for nothing; but he is at present in great trouble, the fruit of his own folly. I send

him, by this post, an order upon you for eight guineas."

As a convincing proof of the influence which Hayley possessed over his mind, he alone, of all his friends, was able to persuade him to leave Weston, and visit him at Eartham, in Sussex. This journey, which took place in July, 1792, was the first which he had made for twenty years. Whilst under Hayley's roof their mornings were spent in revising Cowper's translation of Milton's Latin and Italian Poems, and after dinner they amused themselves with forming a metrical version of Andreini's *Adamo*; but their chief occupation was in contributing to Mrs. Unwin's comfort. Writing from Eartham to Lady Hesketh, Cowper observed :

"I am, without the least dissimulation, in good health; my spirits are about as good as you have ever seen them; and if increase of appetite and a double portion of sleep be advantageous, such are the advantages that I have received from this migration. As to that gloominess of mind which I have had these twenty years, it cleaves to me even here; and could I be translated to Paradise, unless I left my body behind me, would cleave to me even there also. It is my companion for life, and nothing will ever divorce us."

After spending about six weeks with Hayley he returned to Weston, having on the road passed a day with his venerable kinsman, General Cowper.

Cowper's sentiments on the Established Church, as expressed in a letter to Mr. Hill, in December, 1792, were extremely liberal :

“ As to the reformation of the church, I want none, unless by a better provision for the inferior clergy ; and if that could be brought about by emaciating a little some of our too corpulent dignitaries, I should be well contented. The dissenters, I think, Catholics and others, have all a right to the privilege of all other Englishmen, because to deprive them is persecution ; and persecution on any account, but especially on a religious one, is an abomination. But after all, *valeat respublica*, I love my Country, I love my King, and I wish peace and prosperity to Old England.”

In June, 1793, he contemplated writing a Poem, entitled, the Four Ages, but he only completed a fragment. This work, he then observed, is the utmost that he aspired to, but he adds, “ Heaven knows with how feeble a hope.”

Cowper's letters about September in that year contain notices of the late Sir Thomas Lawrence, which are of some interest. To Mr. Johnson he says,—“ Here you will meet Mr. Rose, who comes on the 8th, and brings with him Mr. Lawrence, the painter, you may guess for what purpose.” On the 5th of October he told Mr. Hayley, “ On Tuesday we expect company. Mr. Rose and Lawrence the painter. Yet once more is my patience to be exercised, and once more I am

made to wish that my face had been movable, to put on and take off at pleasure, so as to be portable in a bandbox, and sent to the artist." To Mr. Rose he remarked in November following, " My hope was, that the fine frost would bring you, and the amiable painter with you. If, however, you are prevented by the business of your respective professions, you are well prevented, and I will endeavour to be patient. When the latter was here, he mentioned one day the subject of Diomedes's horses, driven under the axle of his chariot by the thunderbolt which fell at their feet, as a subject for his pencil. It is certainly a noble one, and therefore worthy of his study and attention. It occurred to me at the moment, but I know not what it was that made me forget it again the next moment, that the horses of Achilles flying over the foss, with Patroclus and Automedon in the chariot, would be a good companion for it. Should you happen to recollect this, when you next see him, you may submit it, if you please, to his consideration. I stumbled yesterday on another subject, which reminded me of the said excellent artist, as likely to afford a fine opportunity to the expression that he could give it. It is found in the shooting match in the twenty-third book of the Iliad, between Meriones and Teucer. The former cuts the string with which the dove is tied to the mast-head, and sets her at liberty ; the latter standing at his side, in all the eagerness of emulation, points an arrow at the

mark with his right hand, while with his left he snatches the bow from his competitor. He is a fine poetical figure, but Mr. Lawrence himself must judge whether or not he promises as well for the canvass."

In November Hayley paid a second visit to Weston. He found Cowper apparently well, and enlivened by the society of Mr. Johnson and Mr. Rose. The latter arrived from Althorpe, the seat of Lord Spencer, and was charged to invite him to meet Gibbon at that place. He, however, declined the proffered civility, notwithstanding the earnest entreaties of his friends that he would accept it. Upon this occasion Hayley perceived the approach of the storm which finally wrecked his intellect: "He possessed, he says, completely at this period all the admirable faculties of his mind, and all his native tenderness of heart; but there was something indescribable in his appearance, which led me to apprehend, that without some signal event in his favour to re-animate his spirits, they would gradually sink into hopeless dejection. The state of his aged infirm companion afforded additional ground for increasing solicitude. Her cheerful and beneficent spirit could hardly resist her own accumulated maladies, so far as to preserve ability sufficient to watch over the tender health of him, whom she had watched and guarded so long. Imbecility of body and mind must gradually render this tender and heroic woman unfit for the charge which she

had so laudably sustained. The signs of such imbecility were beginning to be painfully visible; nor can nature present a spectacle more truly pitiable than imbecility in such a shape, eagerly grasping for dominion, which it knows not either how to retain, or how to relinquish."

In January, 1794, Cowper told a friend, "I have just ability enough to transcribe, which is all that I have to do at present: God knows that I write, at this moment, under the pressure of sadness not to be described."

At that time his correspondence with his friends ceased, and he again became a victim to hypochondriasis, to an extent which was truly deplorable: his condition may be judged of by the account which Mr. Greathead gave of him in April in that year to Hayley:

"Lady Hesketh's correspondence acquainted you with the melancholy relapse of our dear friend at Weston; but I am uncertain whether you know, that in the last fortnight he has refused food of every kind, except now and then a very small piece of toasted bread, dipped generally in water, sometimes mixed with a little wine. This, her ladyship informs me, was the case till last Saturday, since when he has eat a little at each family meal. He persists in refusing such medicines as are indispensable to his state of body. In such circumstances, his long continuance in life cannot be expected. How devoutly to be wished is the alleviation

of his danger and distress. You, dear Sir, who know so well the worth of our beloved and admired friend, sympathize with his affliction, and deprecate his loss doubtless in no ordinary degree; you have already most effectually expressed and proved the warmth of your friendship. I cannot think that any thing but your society would have been sufficient, during the infirmity under which his mind has long been oppressed, to have supported him against the shock of Mrs. Unwin's paralytick attack. I am certain that nothing else could have prevailed upon him to undertake the journey to Eartham. You have succeeded where his other friends knew they could not, and where they apprehended no one could. How natural, therefore, nay, how reasonable, is it for them to look to you, as most likely to be instrumental, under the blessing of God, for relief in the present distressing and alarming crisis! It is, indeed, scarcely attemptable to ask any person to take such a journey, and involve himself in so melancholy a scene, with an uncertainty of the desired success: increased as the apparent difficulty is, by dear Mr. Cowper's aversion to all company, and by poor Mrs. Unwin's mental and bodily infirmities. On these accounts Lady Hesketh dares not ask it of you, rejoiced as she would be at your arrival. Am not I, dear Sir, a very presumptuous person, who, in the face of all opposition, dare do this? I am emboldened by

those two powerful supporters, conscience and experience. Was I at Eartham, I would certainly undertake the labour I presume to recommend, for the bare possibility of restoring Mr. Cowper to himself, to his friends, to the public, and to God."

Hayley promptly complied with this request, but even his presence failed to rouse the mind of the sufferer, "who seemed to shrink at times," says that writer, "from every human creature, except from the gentle voice of my son;" and Dr. Willis was consulted, but without any benefit. It was at this time that the effort of Cowper's friends obtained a pension of £300 per annum for him from the royal bounty, principally through the generous zeal of the present Lord Spencer. But he was too deeply absorbed in his own reflections to evince the slightest symptoms of satisfaction on the occasion. In July, 1795, it became absolutely necessary to make an effort with respect to him. Mrs. Unwin was fast sinking into second childhood, and nothing but a change of scene would, it was thought, save Cowper's life. Mr. Johnson generously undertook the care both of his afflicted relative and Mrs. Unwin, and on the 28th of July, 1795, they removed to North Tuddenham, in Norfolk. The last original effort of his pen was that beautiful plaintiff ballad, addressed "to Mary,"—Mrs. Unwin,—which their removal appears to have pro-

duced. From Tuddenham they went to Mundsley, a village on the North coast, for the benefit of the sea air, but without any advantage to Cowper. Whilst there, however, he recovered sufficient energy to write to a clergyman at Weston, for tidings about his favourite village.

They quitted Mundsley for East Dereham in October, and thence took up their residence at Dunham Lodge, four miles from Swaffham. For some months Cowper was incapable of using either his books or his pen, but by a little stratagem he was induced in June 1796 to open Wakefield's edition of Pope's Homer, which contained allusions to his own labours, and his friends were gratified to find that he corrected his translation at the suggestion of some remarks in that work. In September Mr. Johnson and his interesting charge went again to Mundsley, but at the end of the following month they retired to Dereham.

The principal tie which connected Cowper with the world was now severed by the death of Mrs. Unwin, who quietly expired on the 17th of December following; but he evinced little emotion on the occasion. On viewing her corpse, however, he uttered a vehement but unfinished exclamation of passionate sorrow, started suddenly away, and from that moment never again mentioned her name! This amiable woman was buried in East Dereham Church, where the following inscription is placed to her memory:

IN MEMORY OF
MARY,
WIDOW OF THE REV. MORLEY UNWIN,
AND
MOTHER OF THE REV. WILLIAM CAWTHORNE UNWIN,
BORN AT ELY, 1724,
BURIED IN THIS CHURCH, 1796.

TRUSTING in God with all her heart and mind,
This woman prov'd magnanimously kind ;
Endur'd affliction's desolating hail,
And watch'd a Poet through misfortune's vale.
Her spotless dust angelic guards defend !
It is the dust of Unwin, Cowper's friend !
That single title in itself is fame,
For all who read his verse revere her name.

A very few lines will comprise all which it is necessary to relate of the remaining years of Cowper's life. The only alleviation of which his mind was for some time susceptible was in having works of fiction read to him ; but in the summer of 1797 he was induced once more to return to the revision of his Homer, which he completed on the 8th of March, 1799. Such however was the extent of his malady at this period, that though his friends, Lady Spencer and Sir John Throckmorton, rode many miles to visit him, he scarcely spoke to them. A few days afterwards he translated the Poem " Montes Glaciales," and he soon afterwards produced " The Cast Away," which was founded on an incident in Anson's Voyages, a book he had not opened for nearly twenty years. In January, 1800, his health declined so much

that a Physician was called in, by the aid of whose prescription and the daily exercise of a postchaise, his disorder was arrested. Towards the end of that month his attention was recalled to his Homer by Mr. Hayley, who wished him to rewrite a passage in the Iliad. This he did, and sent it to Hayley, which was the last effort of his pen.

By the middle of February his weakness had increased to such a degree as to render him unable to bear the motion of a carriage, and he now ceased to come down stairs, but daily removed from his bed-room to another apartment above it; and before the end of March he was confined to his own chamber. His friend Mr. Rose then visited him, and though he betrayed little pleasure at his arrival, he was much grieved at his departure. On the 19th of April his dissolution appeared to be so close at hand, that Mr. Johnson ventured to apprise him of the fact. "After a pause," says that admirable friend, in his *Life of Cowper*, "of a few moments, which was less interrupted by the objections of his desponding relative than he had dared to hope, he proceeded to an observation more consolatory still; namely, that in the world to which he was hastening, a merciful Redeemer had prepared unspeakable happiness for all his children, and therefore for him. To the first part of this sentence he had listened with composure, but the concluding words were no sooner

uttered, than his passionately expressed entreaties that his companion would desist from any further observations of a similar kind, clearly proved, that though it was on the eve of being invested with angelic light, the darkness of delusion still veiled his spirit."

In the early part of Monday, the 21st, he appeared to be dying, but he so far rallied as to partake slightly of dinner, and continued to sink gradually during Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. In the course of Thursday night he seemed exhausted, and on Miss Perowne, whose assiduous attentions to the Poet for the last five years of his existence cannot be too highly praised, offering him some refreshment, he observed, "What can it signify?" which were the last words he uttered. At five in the morning of Friday, the 25th of April, a deadly change was observed in his countenance, and he continued insensible from that time until about five minutes before five in the afternoon, when he expired, being then in his seventieth year. "In so mild and gentle a manner," says Mr. Johnson, who was present, "did his spirit take its flight, that the persons around him who had their eyes fixed on his countenance, did not perceive the precise moment of his departure."

Cowper was buried in St. Edmund's Chapel, in the Church of East Dereham, on Saturday the 3rd of May; and a monument is placed over his grave with this inscription by Hayley:

IN MEMORY
OF WILLIAM COWPER, Esq.
BORN IN HERTFORDSHIRE 1731.
BURIED IN THIS CHURCH 1800.

YE, who with warmth the public triumph feel
Of talents, dignified by sacred zeal,
Here, to devotion's Bard devoutly just,
Pay your fond tribute due to Cowper's dust !
England exulting in his spotless fame,
Ranks with her dearest sons his fav'rite name ;
Sense, fancy, wit, suffice not all to raise
So clear a title to affection's praise :
His highest honours to the heart belong ;
His virtues form'd the magic of his song.

Hayley thus describes Cowper's person and deportment :

“ From his figure, as it first appeared to me in his sixty-second year, I should imagine that he must have been very comely in his youth ; and little had time injured his countenance, since his features expressed at that period of life all the powers of his mind, and all the sensibility of his heart. He was of a middle stature, rather strong than delicate in the form of his limbs : the colour of his hair was a light brown, that of his eyes a bluish grey, and his complexion ruddy. In his dress he was neat, but not finical ; in his diet temperate, and not dainty. He had an air of pensive reserve in his deportment, and his extreme shyness sometimes produced in his manners an indescribable mixture of awkwardness and dignity ; but no being could be more truly

graceful when he was in perfect health and perfectly pleased with his society. Towards women in particular, his behaviour and conversation was delicate and fascinating in the highest degree."

Cowper's talents and character are so fully displayed in his correspondence and poems, that it is unnecessary in this place to say any thing upon either. His works have attained a popularity which is irresistible evidence of their merit, and the readers of this edition do not require a long essay pointing out faults which they cannot fail to perceive, or by noticing beauties which they are sure to discover. It is certainly proper that disquisitions on the peculiar genius of Poets should be written; but upon Cowper's productions numerous essays already exist, and it would be as needless to repeat what has been before said, as it would be ridiculous to labour after original ideas when the subject has been exhausted by far abler critics.

PREFACE.*

WHEN an Author, by appearing in print, request an audience of the Public, and is upon the point of speaking for himself, whoever presumes to step before him with a preface, and to say, "Nay but hear me first," should have something worthy of attention to offer, or he will be justly deemed officious and impertinent. The judicious reader has probably, upon other occasions, been beforehand with me in this reflection: and I am now very willing it should now be applied to me however I may seem to expose myself to the danger of it. But the thought of having my own name perpetuated in connexion with the name in the title page is so pleasing and flattering to the feelings of my heart, that I am content to risk something for the gratification.

This Preface is not designed to commend the Poems to which it is prefixed. My testimony would be insufficient for those who are not qualified to judge properly for themselves, and unnecessary to those who are. Besides, the seasons which render it improper and unseemly for a man to celebrate his own performances, or those of his nearest relatives, will have some influence in suppressing much of what he might otherwise

* Published with the first volume.

wish to say in favour of a friend, when that friend is indeed an *alter idem*, and excites almost the same emotions of sensibility and affection as he feels for himself.

It is very probable these Poems may come into the hands of some persons, in whom the sight of the author's name will awaken a recollection of incidents and scenes, which through length of time they had almost forgotten. They will be reminded of one, who was once the companion of their chosen hours, and who set out with them in early life in the paths which lead to literary honours, to influence and affluence, with equal prospects of success. But he was suddenly and powerfully withdrawn from those pursuits, and he left them without regret; yet not till he had sufficient opportunity of counting the cost, and of knowing the value of what he gave up. If happiness could have been found in classical attainments, in an elegant taste, in the exertions of wit, fancy, and genius, and in the esteem and converse of such persons, as in these respects were most congenial with himself, he would have been happy. But he was not—He wondered (as thousands in a similar situation still do) that he should continue dissatisfied, with all the means apparently conducive to satisfaction within his reach—But in due time the cause of his disappointment was discovered to him—He had lived without God in the world. In a memorable hour the wisdom which is from above

visited his heart. Then he felt himself a wanderer, and then he found a guide. Upon this change of views, a change of plan and conduct followed of course. When he saw the busy and the gay world in its true light, he left it with as little reluctance as a prisoner, when called to liberty, leaves his dungeon. Not that he became a Cynic or an Ascetic—A heart filled with love to God will assuredly breathe benevolence to men. But the turn of his temper inclining him to rural life, he indulged it, and the providence of God evidently preparing his way and marking out his retreat, he retired into the country. By these steps the good hand of God, unknown to me, was providing for me one of the principal blessings of my life ; a friend and a counsellor, in whose company for almost seven years, though we were seldom seven successive waking hours separated, I always found new pleasure. A friend who was not only a comfort to myself, but a blessing to the affectionate poor people among whom I then lived.

Some time after inclination had thus removed him from the hurry and bustle of life, he was still more secluded by a long indisposition, and my pleasure was succeeded by a proportionable degree of anxiety and concern. But a hope, that the God whom he served would support him under his affliction, and at length vouchsafe him a happy deliverance, never forsook me. The desirable crisis, I trust, is now nearly approaching.

The dawn, the presage of returning day, is already arrived. He is again enabled to resume his pen, and some of the first fruits of his recovery are here presented to the public. In his principal subjects the same acumen, which distinguished him in the early period of life, is happily employed in illustrating and enforcing the truths, of which he received such deep and unalterable impressions in his maturer years. His satire, if it may be called so, is benevolent, (like the operations of the skilful and humane surgeon, who wounds only to heal) dictated by a just regard for the honour of God, and indignant grief excited by the profligacy of the age, and a tender compassion for the souls of men.

His favourite topics are least insisted on in the piece entitled Table Talk ; which therefore, with some regard to the prevailing taste, and that those, who are governed by it, may not be discouraged at the very threshold from proceeding farther, is placed first. In most of the large Poems which follow, his leading design is more explicitly avowed and pursued. He aims to communicate his own perceptions of the truth, beauty, and influence of the religion of the Bible — A religion, which, however discredited by the misconduct of many, who have not renounced the Christian name, proves itself, when rightly understood, and cordially embraced, to be the grand desideratum, which alone can relieve the mind of a man from painful and unavoidable

anxieties, inspire it with stable peace and solid hope, and furnish those motives and prospects which, in the present state of things, are absolutely necessary to produce a conduct worthy of a rational creature, distinguished by a vastness of capacity which no assemblage of earthly good can satisfy, and by a principal and preintimation of immortality.

At a time when hypothesis and conjecture in philosophy are so justly exploded, and little is considered as deserving the name of knowledge, which will not stand the test of experiment, the very use of the term experimental in religious concernments is by too many unhappily rejected with disgust. But we well know, that they, who affect to despise the inward feelings which religious persons speak of, and to treat them as enthusiasm and folly, have inward feelings of their own, which, though they would, they cannot suppress. We have been too long in the secret ourselves, to account the proud, the ambitious, or the voluptuous happy. We must lose the remembrance of what we once were, before we can believe that a man is satisfied with himself, merely because he endeavours to appear so. A smile upon the face is often but a mask worn occasionally and in company, to prevent, if possible, a suspicion of what at the same time is passing in the heart. We know that there are people who seldom smile when they are alone, who therefore are glad to hide themselves in a

throng from the violence of their own reflections; and who, while by their looks and their language they wish to persuade us they are happy, would be glad to change their conditions with a dog. But in defiance of all their efforts they continue to think, forebode, and tremble. This we know, for it has been our own state, and therefore we know how to commiserate it in others.—From this state the Bible relieved us—When we were led to read it with attention, we found ourselves described.—We learnt the causes of our inquietude—we were directed to a method of relief—we tried, and we were not disappointed.

Deus nobis hæc otia fecit.

We are now certain that the Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. It has reconciled us to God, and to ourselves, to our duty, and our situation. It is the balm and cordial of the present life, and a sovereign antidote against the fear of death.

Sed hactenus hæc. Some smaller pieces upon less important subjects close the volume. Not one of them, I believe, was written with a view to publication, but I was unwilling they should be omitted.

JOHN NEWTON.

Charles Square, Hoxton,
February 18, 1782.

TABLE TALK.

Si te fortè meæ gravis uret sarcina chartæ,

Abjicito.

HOR. LIB. I. EP. 13.

A. YOU told me, I remember, glory, built
On selfish principles, is shame and guilt ;
The deeds, that men admire as half divine,
Stark naught, because corrupt in their design.
Strange doctrine this ! that without scruple tears
The laurel that the very lightning spares ;
Brings down the warrior's trophy to the dust,
And eats into his bloody sword like rust.

B. I grant that, men continuing what they are,
Fierce, avaricious, proud, there must be war.
And never meant the rule should be applied
To him that fights with justice on his side.

Let laurels, drench'd in pure Parnassian dews,
Reward his memory, dear to every muse,
Who, with a courage of unshaken root,
In honour's field advancing his firm foot,
Plants it upon the line that Justice draws,
And will prevail or perish in her cause.
'Tis to the virtues of such men man owes
His portion in the good that heaven bestows.

And when recording history displays
Feats of renown, though wrought in ancient days,
Tells of a few stout hearts that fought and died,
Where duty placed them, at their country's side;
The man that is not moved with what he reads,
That takes not fire at their heroic deeds,
Unworthy of the blessings of the brave,
Is base in kind, and born to be a slave.

But let eternal infamy pursue
The wretch to nought but his ambition true,
Who, for the sake of filling with one blast
The post-horns of all Europe, lays her waste.
Think yourself station'd on a towering rock,
To see a people scatter'd like a flock,
Some royal mastiff panting at their heels,
With all the savage thirst a tiger feels ;
Then view him self-proclaim'd in a gazette
Chief monster that has plagued the nations yet.
The globe and sceptre in such hands misplaced,
Those ensigns of dominion, how disgraced !
The glass, that bids man mark the fleeting hour,
And Death's own scythe would better speak his
power ;

Then grace the bony phantom in their stead
With the king's shoulderknot and gay cockade ;
Clothe the twin brethren in each other's dress,
The same their occupation and success.

A. 'Tis your belief the world was made for man ;
Kings do but reason on the selfsame plan :
Maintaining yours, you cannot theirs condemn,
Who think, or seem to think, man made for them.

B. Seldom, alas ! the power of logic reigns -
With much sufficiency in royal brains ;
Such reasoning falls like an inverted cone,
Wanting its proper base to stand upon.
Man made for kings ! those optics are but dim
That tell you so—say, rather, they for him.
That were indeed a king-ennobling thought,
Could they, or would they, reason as they ought.
The diadem, with mighty projects lined,
To catch renown by ruining mankind,
Is worth, with all its gold and glittering store,
Just what the toy will sell for, and no more.

Oh ! bright occasions of dispensing good,
How seldom used, how little understood !
To pour in Virtue's lap her just reward ;
Keep Vice restrain'd behind a double guard ;
To quell the faction, that affronts the throne,
By silent magnanimity alone ;
To nurse with tender care the thriving arts ;
Watch every beam philosophy imparts ;
To give Religion her unbridled scope,
Nor judge by statute a believer's hope ;
With close fidelity and love unfeign'd
To keep the matrimonial bond unstain'd ;
Covetous only of a virtuous praise ;
His life a lesson to the land he sways ;
To touch the sword with conscientious awe,
Nor draw it but when duty bids him draw ;
To sheath it in the peace-restoring close
With joy beyond what victory bestows ;

Blest country, where these kingly glories shine !
Blest England, if this happiness be thine !

A. Guard what you say ; the patriotic tribe
Will sneer, and charge you with a bribe.—B. A
The worth of his three kingdoms I defy, [bribe ?
To lure me to the baseness of a lie.

And, of all lies (be that one poet's boast),
The lie that flatters I abhor the most.

Those arts be theirs who hate his gentle reign,
But he that loves him has no need to feign.

A. Your smooth eulogium, to one crown ad-
Seems to imply a censure on the rest. [dress'd,

B. Quevedo, as he tells his sober tale,
Ask'd, when in hell, to see the royal jail ;
Approved their method in all other things :
But where, good sir, do you confine your kings ?
There—said his guide—the group is full in view.
Indeed?—replied the don—there are but few.
His black interpreter the charge disdain'd—
Few, fellow?—there are all that ever reign'd.

Wit, undistinguishing, is apt to strike
The guilty and not guilty both alike :

I grant the sarcasm is too severe,
And we can readily refute it here ;
While Alfred's name, the father of his age,
And the Sixth Edward's grace the historic page.

A. Kings then at last have but the lot of all :
By their own conduct they must stand or fall.

B. True. While they live, the courtly laureat pays
His quittance ode, his peppercorn of praise ;

TABLE TALK.

And many a dunce, whose fingers itch to write,
Adds, as he can, his tributary mite :
A subject's faults a subject may proclaim,
A monarch's errors are forbidden game !
Thus free from censure, overawed by fear,
And praised for virtues that they scorn to wear,
The fleeting forms of majesty engage
Respect, while stalking o'er life's narrow stage ;
Then leave their crimes for history to scan,
And ask with busy scorn, Was this the man ?

I pity kings, whom worship waits upon
Obsequious from the cradle to the throne ;
Before whose infant eyes the flatterer bows,
And binds a wreath about their baby brows :
Whom education stiffens into state,
And death awakens from that dream too late.
Oh ! if servility with supple knees,
Whose trade it is to smile, to crouch, to please ;
If smooth dissimulation, skill'd to grace
A devil's purpose with an angel's face ;
If smiling peeresses, and simpering peers,
Encompassing his throne a few short years ;
If the gilt carriage and the pamper'd steed,
That wants no driving, and disdains the lead ;
If guards, mechanically form'd in ranks,
Playing, at beat of drum, their martial pranks,
Shouldering and standing as if stuck to stone,
While condescending majesty looks on ;
If monarchy consist in such base things,
Sighing, I say again, I pity kings !

To be suspected, thwarted, and withstood,
E'en when he labours for his country's good ;
To see a band, call'd patriot for no cause,
But that they catch at popular applause,
Careless of all the anxiety he feels,
Hook disappointment on the public wheels ;
With all their flippant fluency of tongue,
Most confident, when palpably most wrong ;
If this be kingly, then farewell for me
All kingship ; and may I be poor and free !

To be the Table Talk of clubs up stairs,
To which the unwash'd artificer repairs,
To indulge his genius after long fatigue,
By diving into cabinet intrigue ;
(For what kings deem a toil, as well they may,
To him is relaxation and mere play)
To win no praise when well wrought plans prevail,
But to be rudely censured when they fail ;
To doubt the love his favourites may pretend,
And in reality to find no friend ;
If he indulge a cultivated taste,
His galleries with the works of art well graced,
To hear it call'd extravagance and waste ;
If these attendants, and if such as these,
Must follow royalty, then welcome ease ;
However humble and confined the sphere,
Happy the state that has not these to fear.

A. Thus men, whose thoughts contemplative
have dwelt

On situations that they never felt,

Start up sagacious, cover'd with the dust
Of dreaming study and pedantic rust,
And prate and preach about what others prove,
As if the world and they were hand and glove.
Leave kingly backs to cope with kingly cares ;
They have their weight to carry, subjects theirs ;
Poets, of all men, ever least regret
Increasing taxes and the nation's debt.
Could you contrive the payment, and rehearse
The mighty plan, oracular, in verse,
No bard, howe'er majestic, old or new,
Should claim my fix'd attention more than you.

B. Not Brindley nor Bridgewater would essay
To turn the course of Helicon that way ;
Nor would the Nine consent the sacred tide
Should purl amidst the traffic of Cheapside,
Or tinkle in 'Change Alley, to amuse
The leathern ears of stockjobbers and Jews.

A. Vouchsafe, at least, to pitch the key of rhyme
To themes more pertinent, if less sublime.
When ministers and ministerial arts ;
Patriots, who love good places at their hearts ;
When admirals, extoll'd for standing still,
Or doing nothing with a deal of skill ;
Generals, who will not conquer when they may,
Firm friends to peace, to pleasure, and good pay ;
When Freedom, wounded almost to despair,
Though discontent alone can find out where ;
When themes like these employ the poet's tongue,
I hear as mute as if a syren sung.

Or tell me, if you can, what power maintains
A Briton's scorn of arbitrary chains ?

That were a theme might animate the dead,
And move the lips of poets cast in lead.

B. The cause, though worth the search, may yet
Conjecture and remark, however shrewd. [elude
They take perhaps a well directed aim,
Who seek it in his climate and his frame.
Liberal in all things else, yet Nature here
With stern severity deals out the year.
Winter invades the spring, and often pours
A chilling flood on summer's drooping flowers ;
Unwelcome vapours quench autumnal beams,
Ungential blasts attending curl the streams :
The peasants urge their harvest, ply the fork
With double toil, and shiver at their work ;
Thus with a rigour, for his good design'd,
She rears her favourite man of all mankind.
His form robust and of elastic tone,
Proportion'd well, half muscle and half bone,
Supplies with warm activity and force
A mind well lodged, and masculine of course.
Hence Liberty, sweet Liberty inspires
And keeps alive his fierce but noble fires.
Patient of constitutional control,
He bears it with meek manliness of soul ;
But if authority grow wanton, woe
To him that treads upon his free-born toe ;
One step beyond the boundary of the laws
Fires him at once in Freedom's glorious cause.

Thus proud prerogative, not much revered,
Is seldom felt, though sometimes seen and heard;
And in his cage, like parrot fine and gay,
Is kept to strut, look big, and talk away.

Born in a climate softer far than ours,
Not form'd like us, with such Herculean powers,
The Frenchman, easy, debonair, and brisk,
Give him his lass, his fiddle, and his frisk,
Is always happy, reign whoever may,
And laughs the sense of misery far away :
He drinks his simple beverage with a gust ;
And, feasting on an onion and a crust,
We never feel the alacrity and joy
With which he shouts and carols *Vive le Roy*,
Fill'd with as much true merriment and glee
As if he heard his king say—Slave, be free.

Thus happiness depends, as Nature shows,
Less on exterior things than most suppose.
Vigilant over all that he has made,
Kind Providence attends with gracious aid ;
Bids equity throughout his works prevail,
And weighs the nations in an even scale ;
He can encourage slavery to a smile,
And fill with discontent a British isle.

A. Freeman and slave then, if the case be such,
Stand on a level ; and you prove too much :
If all men indiscriminately share
His fostering power, and tutelary care,
As well be yoked by Despotism's hand,
As dwell at large in Britain's charter'd land.

B. No. Freedom has a thousand charms to show,
That slaves, howe'er contented, never know.
The mind attains beneath her happy reign
The growth that Nature meant she should attain;
The varied fields of science, ever new,
Opening and wider opening on her view,
She ventures onward with a prosperous force,
While no base fear impedes her in her course :
Religion, richest favour of the skies,
Stands most reveal'd before the freeman's eyes ;
No shades of superstition blot the day,
Liberty chases all that gloom away ;
The soul, emancipated, unoppress'd,
Free to prove all things and hold fast the best,
Learns much ; and to a thousand listening minds
Communicates with joy the good she finds ;
Courage in arms, and ever prompt to show
His manly forehead to the fiercest foe ;
Glorious in war, but for the sake of peace,
His spirits rising as his toils increase,
Guards well what arts and industry have won,
And Freedom claims him for her firstborn son.
Slaves fight for what were better cast away—
The chain that binds them, and a tyrant's sway ;
But they that fight for freedom undertake
The noblest cause mankind can have at stake :—
Religion, virtue, truth, whate'er we call
A blessing—freedom is the pledge of all.
O Liberty ! the prisoner's pleasing dream,
The poet's muse, his passion, and his theme ;

Genius is thine, and thou art Fancy's nurse ;
Lost without thee the ennobling powers of verse ;
Heroic song from thy free touch acquires
Its clearest tone, the rapture it inspires :
Place me where Winter breathes his keenest air,
And I will sing, if Liberty be there ;
And I will sing at Liberty's dear feet,
In Afric's torrid clime, or India's fiercest heat.

A. Sing where you please ; in such a cause I grant
An English poet's privilege to rant ;
But is not Freedom—at least, is not ours
Too apt to play the wanton with her powers,
Grow freakish, and, o'erleaping every mound,
Spread anarchy and terror all around ?

B. Agreed. But would you sell or slay your horse
For bounding and curvetting in his course ?
Or if, when ridden with a careless rein,
He break away, and seek the distant plain ?
No. His high mettle, under good control,
Gives him Olympic speed, and shoots him to the
goal.

Let Discipline employ her wholesome arts ;
Let magistrates alert perform their parts,
Not skulk or put on a prudential mask,
As if their duty were a desperate task ;
Let active laws apply the needful curb,
To guard the peace that riot would disturb ;
And Liberty, preserved from wild excess,
Shall raise no feuds for armies to suppress.
When tumult lately burst his prison door,
And set plebeian thousands in a roar ;

When he usurp'd authority's just place,
And dared to look his master in the face ;
When the rude rabble's watchword was—Destroy,
And blazing London seem'd a second Troy ;
Liberty blush'd, and hung her drooping head,
Beheld their progress with the deepest dread ;
Blush'd, that effects like these she should produce,
Worse than the deeds of galley-slaves broke loose.
She loses in such storms her very name,
And fierce licentiousness should bear the blame.

Incomparable gem ! thy worth untold ;
Cheap, though blood-bought, and thrown away
when sold ;

May no foes ravish thee, and no false friend
Betray thee, while professing to defend !
Prize it, ye ministers ; ye monarchs, spare ;
Ye patriots, guard it with a miser's care.

A. Patriots, alas ! the few that have been found,
Where most they flourish upon English ground,
The country's need have scantily supplied,
And the last left the scene when Chatham died.

B. Not so—the virtue still adorns our age,
Though the chief actor died upon the stage.
In him Demosthenes was heard again ;
Liberty taught him her Athenian strain ;
She clothed him with authority and awe,
Spoke from his lips, and in his looks gave law.
His speech, his form, his action, full of grace,
And all his country beaming in his face,
He stood, as some inimitable hand
Would strive to make a Paul or Tully stand.

No sycophant or slave, that dared oppose
Her sacred cause, but trembled when he rose ;
And every venal stickler for the yoke
Felt himself crush'd at the first word he spoke.

Such men are raised to station and command,
When Providence means mercy to a land.
He speaks, and they appear ; to him they owe
Skill to direct, and strength to strike the blow ;
To manage with address, to seize with power
The crisis of a dark decisive hour.
So Gideon earn'd a victory not his own ;
Subserviency his praise, and that alone.

Poor England ! thou art a devoted deer,
Beset with every ill but that of fear.
The nations hunt ; all mark thee for a prey ;
They swarm around thee, and thou stand'st at bay :
Undaunted still, though wearied and perplex'd,
Once Chatham saved thee ; but who saves thee next ?
Alas ! the tide of pleasure sweeps along
All that should be the boast of British song.
'Tis not the wreath that once adorn'd thy brow,
The prize of happier times, will serve thee now.
Our ancestry, a gallant christian race,
Patterns of every virtue, every grace,
Confess'd a God ; they kneel'd before they fought,
And praised him in the victories he wrought.
Now from the dust of ancient days bring forth
Their sober zeal, integrity, and worth ;
Courage, ungraced by these, affronts the skies,
Is but the fire without the sacrifice.

The stream that feeds the wellspring of the heart
Not more invigorates life's noblest part,
Than virtue quickens with a warmth divine
The powers that sin hath brought to a decline.

A. The inestimable estimate of Brown
Rose like a paper-kite, and charm'd the town;
But measures, plann'd and executed well,
Shifted the wind that raised it, and it fell.
He trod the very selfsame ground you tread,
And victory refuted all he said.

B. And yet his judgment was not framed amiss;
Its error, if it err'd, was merely this—
He thought the dying hour already come,
And a complete recovery struck him dumb.
But that effeminacy, folly, lust,
Enervate and enfeeble, and needs must;
And that a nation shamefully debased
Will be despised and trampled on at last,
Unless sweet penitence her powers renew;
Is truth, if history itself be true.
There is a time, and justice marks the date,
For long forbearing clemency to wait;
That hour elapsed, the incurable revolt
Is punish'd, and down comes the thunderbolt.
If Mercy then put by the threatening blow,
Must she perform the same kind office now?
May she! and, if offended Heaven be still
Accessible, and prayer prevail, she will.
'Tis not, however, insolence and noise,
The tempest of tumultuary joys,

Nor is it yet despondence and dismay
Will win her visits or engage her stay;
Prayer only, and the penitential tear,
Can call her smiling down, and fix her here.

But when a country (one that I could name)
In prostitution sinks the sense of shame;
When infamous venality, grown bold,
Writes on his bosom, to be let or sold;
When perjury, that Heaven defying vice,
Sells oaths by tale, and at the lowest price,
Stamps God's own name upon a lie just made,
To turn a penny in the way of trade;
When avarice starves (and never hides his face)
Two or three millions of the human race,
And not a tongue inquires how, where, or when,
Though conscience will have twinges now and then;
When profanation of the sacred cause
In all its parts, times, ministry, and laws,
Bespeaks a land, once christian, fallen and lost,
In all that wars against that title most;
What follows next let cities of great name,
And regions long since desolate proclaim.
Nineveh, Babylon, and ancient Rome
Speak to the present times, and times to come;
They cry aloud in every careless ear,
Stop, while ye may; suspend your mad career;
O learn, from our example and our fate,
Learn wisdom and repentance ere too late.

Not only vice disposes and prepares
The mind, that slumbers sweetly in her snares,

To stoop to tyranny's usurp'd command,
And bend her polish'd neck beneath his hand
(A dire effect, by one of Nature's laws
Unchangeably connected with its cause);
But Providence himself will intervene,
To throw his dark displeasure o'er the scene.
All are his instruments; each form of war,
What burns at home, or threatens from afar,
Nature in arms, her elements at strife,
The storms that overset the joys of life,
Are but his rods to scourge a guilty land,
And waste it at the bidding of his hand.
He gives the word, and mutiny soon roars
In all her gates, and shakes her distant shores;
The standards of all nations are unfurl'd;
She has one foe, and that one foe the world.
And if he doom that people with a frown,
And mark them with a seal of wrath press'd down,
Obduracy takes place; callous and tough,
The reprobated race grows judgment proof:
Earth shakes beneath them, and Heaven roars
above;
But nothing scares them from the course they love
To the lascivious pipe and wanton song,
That charm down fear, they frolic it along,
With mad rapidity and unconcern,
Down to the gulf from which is no return.
They trust in navies, and their navies fail—
God's curse can cast away ten thousand sail!
They trust in armies, and their courage dies;
In wisdom, wealth, in fortune, and in lies;

But all they trust in withers, as it must,
When he commands in whom they place no trust.
Vengeance at last pours down upon their coast
A long despised, but now victorious, host ;
Tyranny sends the chain that must abridge
The noble sweep of all their privilege ;
Gives liberty the last, the mortal shock ;
Slips the slave's collar on, and snaps the lock.

A. Such lofty strains embellish what you teach,
Mean you to prophesy, or but to preach ?

B. I know the mind that feels indeed the fire
The muse imparts, and can command the lyre,
Acts with a force, and kindles with a zeal,
Whate'er the theme, that others never feel.
If human woes her soft attention claim,
A tender sympathy pervades the frame,
She pours a sensibility divine
Along the nerve of every feeling line.
But if a deed not tamely to be borne
Fire indignation and a sense of scorn,
The strings are swept with such a power, so loud,
The storm of music shakes the astonish'd crowd.
So, when remote futurity is brought
Before the keen inquiry of her thought,
A terrible sagacity informs
The poet's heart ; he looks to distant storms ;
He hears the thunder ere the tempest lowers ;
And arm'd with strength surpassing human powers,
Seizes events as yet unknown to man,
And darts his soul into the dawning plan.

Hence, in a Roman mouth, the graceful name
Of prophet and of poet was the same ;
Hence British poets too the priesthood shared,
And every hallow'd druid was a bard.
But no prophetic fires to me belong ;
I play with syllables, and sport in song.

A. At Westminster, where little poets strive
To set a distich upon six and five,
Where discipline helps opening buds of sense,
And makes his pupils proud with silver pence,
I was a poet too : but modern taste
Is so refined, and delicate, and chaste,
That verse, whatever fire the fancy warms,
Without a creamy smoothness has no charms.
Thus all success depending on an ear,
And thinking I might purchase it too dear,
If sentiment were sacrificed to sound,
And truth cut short to make a period round,
I judged a man of sense could scarce do worse,
Than caper in the morris dance of verse.

B. Thus reputation is a spur to wit,
And some wits flag through fear of losing it.
Give me the line that ploughs its stately course
Like a proud swan, conquering the stream by force ;
That, like some cottage beauty, strikes the heart,
Quite unindebted to the tricks of art.
When labour and when dullness, club in hand,
Like the two figures at St. Dunstón's stand,
Beating alternately, in measured time,
The clockwork tintinabulum of rhyme,

Exact and regular the sounds will be ;
But such mere quarter-strokes are not for me.

From him who rears a poem lank and long,
To him who strains his all into a song ;
Perhaps some bonny Caledonian air,
All birks and braes, though he was never there ;
Or, having whelp'd a prologue with great pains,
Feels himself spent, and fumbles for his brains ;
A prologue interdash'd with many a stroke—
An art contrived to advertise a joke,
So that the jest is clearly to be seen,
Not in the words—but in the gap between ;
Manner is all in all, whate'er is writ,
The substitute for genius, sense, and wit.

To dally much with subjects mean and low
Proves that the mind is weak, or makes it so.
Neglected talents rust into decay,
And every effort ends in pushpin play.
The man that means success should soar above
A soldier's feather, or a lady's glove ;
Else, summoning the muse to such a theme,
The fruit of all her labour is whipp'd cream.
As if an eagle flew aloft, and then—
Stoop'd from its highest pitch to pounce a wren.
As if the poet, purposing to wed,
Should carve himself a wife in gingerbread.

Agès elapsed ere Homer's lamp appear'd,
And agès ere the Mantuan swan was heard :
To carry nature lengths unknown before,
To give a Milton birth, ask'd agès more.

Thus genius rose and set at order'd times,
And shot a dayspring into distant climes,
Ennobling every region that he chose ;
He sunk in Greece, in Italy he rose ;
And, tedious years of Gothic darkness pass'd,
Emerged all splendour in our isle at last.
Thus lovely halcyons dive into the main,
Then show far off their shining plumes again.

A. Is genius only found in epic lays ?
Prove this, and forfeit all pretence to praise.
Make their heroic powers your own at once,
Or candidly confess yourself a dunce.

B. These were the chief ; each interval of night
Was graced with many an undulating light.
In less illustrious bards his beauty shone
A meteor, or a star ; in these, the sun.

The nightingale may claim the topmost bough,
While the poor grasshopper must chirp below.
Like him unnoticed, I, and such as I,
Spread little wings, and rather skip than fly ;
Perch'd on the meagre produce of the land,
An ell or two of prospect we command ;
But never peep beyond the thorny bound,
Or oaken fence, that hems the paddock round.

In Eden, ere yet innocence of heart
Had faded, poetry was not an art ;
Language, above all teaching, or if taught,
Only by gratitude and glowing thought,
Elegant as simplicity, and warm
As ecstasy, unmanacled by form,

Not prompted, as in our degenerate days,
By low ambition and the thirst of praise,
Was natural as is the flowing stream,
And yet magnificent—a God the theme !
That theme on earth exhausted, though above
'Tis found as everlasting as his love,
Man lavish'd all his thoughts on human things—
The feats of heroes and the wrath of kings ;
But still, while virtue kindled his delight,
The song was moral, and so far was right.
'Twas thus till luxury seduced the mind
To joys less innocent, as less refined ;
Then genius danced a bacchanal ; he crown'd
The brimming goblet, seized the thyrsus, bound
His brows with ivy, rush'd into the field
Of wild imagination, and there reel'd,
The victim of his own lascivious fires,
And, dizzy with delight, profaned the sacred wires :
Anacreon, Horace play'd in Greece and Rome
This bedlam part ; and others nearer home.
When Cromwell fought for power, and while he
 reign'd
The proud protector of the power he gain'd,
Religion harsh, intolerant, austere,
Parent of manners like herself severe,
Drew a rough copy of the Christian face
Without the smile, the sweetness, or the grace ;
The dark and sullen humour of the time
Judged every effort of the muse a crime ;
Verse, in the finest mould of fancy cast,
Was lumber in an age so void of taste.

But when the second Charles assumed the sway,
And arts revived beneath a softer day,
Then, like a bow long forced into a curve,
The mind, released from too constrain'd a nerve,
Flew to its first position with a spring,
That made the vaulted roofs of pleasure ring.
His court, the dissolute and hateful school
Of wantonness, where vice was taught by rule,
Swarm'd with a scribbling herd, as deep inlaid
With brutal lust as ever Circe made.

From these a long succession, in the rage
Of rank obscenity, debauch'd their age :
Nor ceased till, ever anxious to redress
The abuses of her sacred charge, the press,
The muse instructed a well nurtured train
Of abler votaries to cleanse the stain,
And claim the palm for purity of song,
That lewdness had usurp'd and worn so long.
Then decent pleasantry and sterling sense,
That neither gave nor would endure offence,
Whipp'd out of sight, with satire just and keen,
The puppy pack that had defiled the scene.

In front of these came Addison. In him
Humour in holiday and sightly trim,
Sublimity and attic taste combined,
To polish, furnish, and delight the mind.
Then Pope, as harmony itself exact,
In verse well disciplined, complete, compact,
Gave virtue and morality a grace,
That, quite eclipsing pleasure's painted face,

Levied a tax of wonder and applause,
E'en on the fools that trampled on their laws.
But he (his musical finesse was such,
So nice his ear, so delicate his touch)
Made poetry a mere mechanic art ;
And every warbler has his tune by heart.
Nature imparting her satiric gift,
Her serious mirth, to Arbuthnot and Swift,
With droll sobriety they raised a smile
At folly's cost, themselves unmoved the while.
That constellation set, the world in vain
Must hope to look upon their like again.

A. Are we then left—B. Not wholly in the dark ;
Wit now and then, struck smartly, shows a spark,
Sufficient to redeem the modern race
From total night and absolute disgrace.
While servile trick and imitative knack
Confine the million in the beaten track,
Perhaps some courser, who disdains the road,
Snuffs up the wind, and flings himself abroad.

Contemporaries all surpass'd, see one ;
Short his career indeed, but ably run ;
Churchill ; himself unconscious of his powers,
In penury consumed his idle hours ;
And, like a scatter'd seed at random sown,
Was left to spring by vigour of his own.
Lifted at length, by dignity of thought
And dint of genius, to an affluent lot,
He laid his head in luxury's soft lap,
And took, too often, there his easy nap.
If brighter beams than all he threw not forth,

'Twas negligence in him, not want of worth.
Surly and slovenly, and bold and coarse,
Too proud for art, and trusting in mere force,
Spendthrift alike of money and of wit,
Always at speed, and never drawing bit,
He struck the lyre in such a careless mood,
And so disdain'd the rules he understood,
The laurel seem'd to wait on his command ;
He snatch'd it rudely from the muses' hand.
Nature, exerting an unwearied power,
Forms, opens, and gives scent to every flower ;
Spreads the fresh verdure of the field, and leads
The dancing Naiads through the dewy meads :
She fills profuse ten thousand little throats
With music, modulating all their notes ; [known,
And charms the woodland scenes, and wilds un-
With artless airs and concerts of her own :
But seldom (as if fearful of expense)
Vouchsafes to man a poet's just pretence—
Fervency, freedom, fluency of thought,
Harmony, strength, words exquisitely sought ;
Fancy, that from the bow that spans the sky
Brings colours, dipp'd in Heaven, that never die ;
A soul exalted above earth, a mind
Skill'd in the characters that form mankind ;
And as the sun, in rising beauty dress'd,
Looks to the westward from the dappled east,
And marks, whatever clouds may interpose,
Ere yet his race begins, its glorious close ;
An eye like his to catch the distant goal ;
Or, ere the wheels of verse begin to roll,

Like his to shed illuminating rays
On every scene and subject it surveys :
Thus graced, the man asserts a poet's name,
And the world cheerfully admits the claim.
Pity Religion has so seldom found
A skilful guide into poetic ground !
The flowers would spring where'er she deign'd to
And every muse attend her in her way. [stray,
Virtue indeed meets many a rhyming friend,
And many a compliment politely penn'd ;
But, unattired in that becoming vest
Religion weaves for her, and half undress'd,
Stands in the desert shivering and forlorn,
A wintry figure, like a wither'd thorn.
The shelves are full, all other themes are sped ;
Hackney'd and worn to the last flimsy thread,
Satire has long since done his best ; and curst
And loathsome ribaldry has done his worst,
Fancy has sported all her powers away
In tales, in trifles, and in children's play ;
And 'tis the sad complaint, and almost true,
Whate'er we write, we bring forth nothing new.
'Twere new indeed to see a bard all fire,
Touch'd with a coal from Heaven, assume the lyre,
And tell the world, still kindling as he sung,
With more than mortal music on his tongue,
That He, who died below, and reigns above,
Inspires the song, and that his name is love.

For, after all, if merely to beguile,
By flowing numbers and a flowery style,
The tædium that the lazy rich endure,

Which now and then sweet poetry may cure ;
 Or, if to see the name of idle self,
 Stamp'd on the well bound quarto, grace the shelf,
 To float a bubble on the breath of fame,
 Prompt his endeavour, and engage his aim,
 Debased to servile purposes of pride,
 How are the powers of genius misapplied !
 The gift, whose office is the giver's praise,
 To trace him in his word, his works, his ways !
 Then spread the rich discovery, and invite
 Mankind to share in the divine delight :
 Distorted from its use and just design,
 To make the pitiful possessor shine,
 To purchase at the fool-frequented fair
 Of vanity a wreath for self to wear,
 Is profanation of the basest kind—
 Proof of a trifling and a worthless mind.

A. Hail, Sternhold, then ; and, Hopkins, hail !—

B. Amen.

If flattery, folly, lust, employ the pen ;
 If acrimony, slander, and abuse,
 Give it a charge to blacken and traduce ;
 Though Butler's wit, Pope's numbers, Prior's ease,
 With all that fancy can invent to please,
 Adorn the polish'd periods as they fall,
 One madrigal of theirs is worth them all.

A. 'Twould thin the ranks of the poetic tribe,
 To dash the pen through all that you proscribe.

B. No matter—we could shift when they were
 not ;

And should, no doubt, if they were all forgot.

THE PROGRESS OF ERROR.

Si quid loquar audiendum. HOR. LIB. IV. OD. 2.

SING, muse (if such a theme, so dark, so long,
 May find a muse to grace it with a song),
 By what unseen and unsuspected arts
 The serpent Error twines round human hearts;
 Tell where she lurks, beneath what flowery shades,
 That not a glimpse of genuine light pervades,
 The poisonous, black, insinuating worm
 Successfully conceals her loathsome form.
 Take, if ye can, ye careless and supine,
 Counsel and caution from a voice like mine!
 Truths, that the theorist could never reach,
 And observation taught me, I would teach.

Not all, whose eloquence the fancy fills,
 Musical as the chime of tinkling rills,
 Weak to perform, though mighty to pretend,
 Can trace her mazy windings to their end;
 Discern the fraud beneath the specious lure,
 Prevent the danger, or prescribe the cure.
 The clear harangue, and cold as it is clear,
 Falls soporific on the listless ear;
 Like quicksilver, the rhetoric they display
 Shines as it runs, but grasp'd at, slips away.

Placed for his trial on this bustling stage,
From thoughtless youth to ruminating age,
Free in his will to choose or to refuse,
Man may improve the crisis, or abuse ;
Else, on the fatalist's unrighteous plan,
Say to what bar amenable were man ?
With nought in charge he could betray no trust
And, if he fell, would fall because he must ;
If love reward him, or if vengeance strike,
His recompense in both unjust alike.
Divine authority within his breast
Brings every thought, word, action, to the test
Warns him or prompts, approves him or restrain
As reason, or as passion, takes the reins.
Heaven from above, and conscience from within
Cries in his startled ear—Abstain from sin !
The world around solicits his desire,
And kindles in his soul a treacherous fire ;
While, all his purposes and steps to guard,
Peace follows virtue as its sure reward ;
And pleasure brings as surely in her train
Remorse, and sorrow, and vindictive pain.

Man, thus endued with an elective voice,
Must be supplied with objects of his choice.
Where'er he turns, enjoyment and delight,
Or present, or in prospect, meet his sight :
Those open on the spot their honey'd store ;
These call him loudly to pursuit of more.
His unexhausted mine the sordid vice
Avarice shows, and virtue is the price.

Here various motives his ambition raise— [praise ;
Power, pomp, and splendour, and the thirst of
There beauty woos him with expanded arms ;
E'en bacchanalian madness has its charms.

Nor these alone, whose pleasures less refined
Might well alarm the most unguarded mind,
Seek to supplant his inexperienced youth,
Or lead him devious from the path of truth ;
Hourly allurements on his passions press,
Safe in themselves, but dangerous in the excess.

Hark ! how it floats upon the dewy air !
O what a dying, dying close was there !
'Tis harmony from yon sequester'd bower,
Sweet harmony, that soothes the midnight hour !
Long ere the charioteer of day had run
His morning course the enchantment was begun ;
And he shall gild yon mountain's height again,
Ere yet the pleasing toil becomes a pain.

Is this the rugged path, the steep ascent,
That virtue points to ? Can a life thus spent
Lead to the bliss she promises the wise,
Detach the soul from earth, and speed her to the
Ye devotees to your adored employ, [skies ?
Enthusiasts, drunk with an unreal joy,
Love makes the music of the blest above,
Heaven's harmony is universal love ;
And earthly sounds, though sweet and well com-
And lenient as soft opiates to the mind, [bined,
Leave vice and folly unsubdued behind.

Gray dawn appears ; the sportsman and his train
Speckle the bosom of the distant plain ;

'Tis he, the Nimrod of the neighbouring lairs ;
Save that his scent is less acute than theirs,
For persevering chase, and headlong leaps,
True beagle as the staunchest hound he keeps.
Charged with the folly of his life's mad scene,
He takes offence, and wonders what you mean ;
The joy the danger and the toil o'erpays—
'Tis exercise, and health, and length of days.
Again impetuous to the field he flies ;
Leaps every fence but one, there falls and dies ;
Like a slain deer, the tumbrel brings him home,
Unmiss'd but by his dogs and by his groom.

Ye clergy, while your orbit is your place,
Lights of the world, and stars of human race ;
But if eccentric ye forsake your sphere,
Prodigies ominous, and view'd with fear :
The comet's baneful influence is a dream ;
Yours real, and pernicious in the extreme.
What then !—are appetites and lusts laid down
With the same ease that man puts on his gown ?
Will avarice and concupiscence give place,
Charm'd by the sounds—Your Reverence, or your
Grace ?

No. But his own engagement binds him fast ;
Or, if it does not, brands him to the last,
What atheists call him—a designing knave,
A mere church juggler, hypocrite, and slave.
Oh, laugh or mourn with me the rueful jest,
A cassock'd huntsman, and a fiddling priest !
He from Italian songsters takes his cue :
Set Paul to music, he shall quote him too.

He takes the field, the master of the pack
Cries—Well done, saint! and claps him on the
Is this the path of sanctity? Is this [back.
To stand a waymark in the road to bliss?
Himself a wanderer from the narrow way,
His silly sheep what wonder if they stray?
Go, cast your orders at your bishop's feet,
Send your dishonour'd gown to Monmouth Street!
The sacred function in your hands is made—
Sad sacrilege! no function, but a trade!

Occiduus is a pastor of renown,
When he has pray'd and preach'd the sabbath down,
With wire and catgut he concludes the day,
Quavering and semiquavering care away.
The full concerto swells upon your ear;
All elbows shake. Look in, and you would swear
The Babylonian tyrant with a nod
Had summon'd them to serve his golden god.
So well that thought the employment seems to suit,
Psaltery and sackbut, dulcimer and flute.
O fie! 'tis evangelical and pure:
Observe each face, how sober and demure!
Ecstasy sets her stamp on every mien;
Chins fallen, and not an eyeball to be seen.
Still I insist, though music heretofore
Has charm'd me much (not e'en Occiduus more),
Love, joy, and peace make harmony more meet
For sabbath evenings, and perhaps as sweet.

Will not the sickliest sheep of every flock
Resort to this example as a rock;

There stand, and justify the foul abuse
Of sabbath hours with plausible excuse;
If apostolic gravity be free
To play the fool on Sundays, why not we?
If he the tinkling harpsichord regards
As inoffensive, what offence in cards?
Strike up the fiddles, let us all be gay!
Laymen have leave to dance, if parsons play.

Oh Italy!—Thy sabbaths will be soon
Our sabbaths, closed with mummerly and buffoon.
Preaching and pranks will share the motley scene,
Ours parcel'd out, as thine have ever been,
God's worship and the mountebank between.
What says the prophet? Let that day be blest
With holiness and consecrated rest.
Pastime and business both it should exclude,
And bar the door the moment they intrude;
Nobly distinguish'd above all the six
By deeds in which the world must never mix.
Hear him again. He calls it a delight,
A day of luxury observed aright,
When the glad soul is made Heaven's welcome
guest,

Sits banqueting, and God provides the feast.
But triflers are engaged and cannot come;
Their answer to the call is—Not at home.

O the dear pleasures of the velvet plain,
The painted tablets, dealt and dealt again!
Cards with what rapture, and the polish'd die,
The yawning chasm of indolence supply!

Then to the dance, and make the sober moon
Witness of joys that shun the sight of noon.
Blame, cynic, if you can, quadrille or ball,
The snug close party, or the splendid hall,
Where Night, down stooping from her ebon throne,
Views constellations brighter than her own.
'Tis innocent, and harmless, and refined,
The balm of care, Elysium of the mind.
Innocent ! Oh, if venerable Time
Slain at the foot of Pleasure be no crime,
Then, with his silver beard and magic wand,
Let Comus rise archbishop of the land ;
Let him your rubric and your feasts prescribe,
Grand metropolitan of all the tribe.

Of manners rough, and coarse athletic cast,
The rank debauch suits Clodio's filthy taste.
Rufillus, exquisitely form'd by rule,
Not of the moral but the dancing school,
Wonders at Clodio's follies, in a tone
As tragical, as others at his own.
He cannot drink five bottles, bilk the score,
Then kill a constable, and drink five more ;
But he can draw a pattern, make a tart,
And has the ladies' etiquette by heart.
Go, fool ; and, arm in arm with Clodio, plead
Your cause before a bar you little dread ;
But know, the law that bids the drunkard die
Is far too just to pass the trifier by.
Both baby-featured, and of infant size,
View'd from a distance, and with heedless eyes,

Folly and innocence are so alike,
The difference, though essential, fails to strike.
Yet Folly ever has a vacant stare,
A simpering countenance, and a trifling air;
But Innocence, sedate, serene, erect,
Delights us, by engaging our respect.
Man, Nature's guest by invitation sweet,
Receives from her both appetite and treat;
But, if he play the glutton and exceed,
His benefactress blushes at the deed,
For Nature, nice, as liberal to dispense,
Made nothing but a brute the slave of sense.
Daniel ate pulse by choice—example rare!
Heaven bless'd the youth, and made him fresh
Gorgonius sits, abdominous and wan, [and fair.
Like a fat squab upon a Chinese fan:
He snuffs far off the anticipated joy;
Turtle and venison all his thoughts employ;
Prepares for meals as jockeys take a sweat,
Oh, nauseous!—an emetic for a whet!
Will Providence o'erlook the wasted good?
Temperance were no virtue if he could.

That pleasures, therefore, or what such we call,
Are hurtful is a truth confess'd by all.
And some, that seem to threaten virtue less,
Still hurtful in the abuse, or by the excess.

Is man then only for his torment placed
The centre of delights he may not taste?
Like fabled Tantalus, condemn'd to hear
The precious stream still purling in his ear,

Lip-deep in what he longs for, and yet curst
With prohibition and perpetual thirst ?
No, wrangler—destitute of shame and sense,
The precept, that enjoins him abstinence,
Forbids him none but the licentious joy,
Whose fruit, though fair, tempts only to destroy.
Remorse, the fatal egg by Pleasure laid
In every bosom where her nest is made,
Hatch'd by the beams of truth, denies him rest,
And proves a raging scorpion in his breast.
No pleasure ? Are domestic comforts dead ?
Are all the nameless sweets of friendship fled ?
Has time worn out, or fashion put to shame,
Good sense, good health, good conscience, and
good fame ?

All these belong to virtue, and all prove
That virtue has a title to your love.
Have you no touch of pity, that the poor
Stand starved at your inhospitable door ?
Or if yourself, too scantily supplied,
Need help, let honest industry provide.
Earn, if you want ; if you abound, impart :
These both are pleasures to the feeling heart.
No pleasure ? has some sickly eastern waste
Sent us a wind to parch us at a blast ?
Can British Paradise no scenes afford
To please her sated and indifferent lord ?
Are sweet philosophy's enjoyments run
Quite to the lees ? And has religion none ?
Brutes capable would tell you 'tis a lie,
And judge you from the kennel and the sty.

Delights like these, ye sensual and profane,
Ye are bid, begg'd, besought to entertain ;
Call'd to these crystal streams, do ye turn off
Obscene to swill and swallow at a trough ?
Envy the beast, then, on whom Heaven bestows
Your pleasures, with no curses in the close.

Pleasure admitted in undue degree
Enslaves the will, nor leaves the judgment free.
'Tis not alone the grape's enticing juice
Unnerves the moral powers, and mars their use ;
Ambition, avarice, and the lust of fame,
And woman, lovely woman, does the same.
The heart, surrender'd to the ruling power
Of some ungovern'd passion every hour,
Finds by degrees the truths that once bore sway,
And all their deep impressions, wear away ;
So coin grows smooth, in traffic current pass'd,
Till Cæsar's image is effaced at last.

The breach, though small at first, soon opening
In rushes folly with a full moon tide, [wide,
Then welcome errors, of whatever size,
To justify it by a thousand lies.
As creeping ivy clings to wood or stone,
And hides the ruin that it feeds upon ;
So sophistry cleaves close to and protects
Sin's rotten trunk, concealing its defects.
Mortals, whose pleasures are their only care,
First wish to be imposed on, and then are.
And, lest the fulsome artifice should fail,
Themselves will hide it's coarseness with a veil.

Not more industrious are the just and true
To give to Virtue what is Virtue's due—
The praise of wisdom, comeliness, and worth,
And call her charms to public notice forth—
Than Vice's mean and disingenuous race
To hide the shocking features of her face.
Her form with dress and lotion they repair;
Then kiss their idol, and pronounce her fair.

The sacred implement I now employ
Might prove a mischief, or at best a toy;
A trifle, if it move but to amuse;
But, if to wrong the judgment and abuse,
Worse than a poniard in the basest hand,
It stabs at once the morals of a land.

Ye writers of what none with safety reads,
Footing it in the dance that Fancy leads;
Ye novelists, who mar what ye would mend,
Sniveling and driveling folly without end;
Whose corresponding misses fill the ream
With sentimental frippery and dream,
Caught in a delicate soft silken net
By some lewd earl, or rakehell baronet:
Ye pimps who, under virtue's fair pretence,
Steal to the closet of young innocence,
And teach her, unexperienced yet and green,
To scribble as you scribbled at fifteen;
Who, kindling a combustion of desire,
With some cold moral think to quench the fire;
Though all your engineering proves in vain,
The dribbling stream ne'er puts it out again:

Oh that a verse had power, and could command
Far, far away, these flesh-flies of the land,
Who fasten without mercy on the fair,
And suck, and leave a craving maggot there!
Howe'er disguised the inflammatory tale,
And cover'd with a fine spun specious veil;
Such writers, and such readers, owe the gust
And relish of their pleasures all to lust.

But the muse, eagle-pinion'd, has in view
A quarry more important still than you;
Down, down the wind she swims, and sails away,
Now stoops upon it, and now grasps the prey.

Petronius! all the muses weep for thee;
But every tear shall scald thy memory:
The graces too, while Virtue at their shrine
Lay bleeding under that soft hand of thine,
Felt each a mortal stab in her own breast,
Abhorr'd the sacrifice, and cursed the priest.
Thou polish'd and high-finish'd foe to truth,
Graybeard corrupter of our listening youth,
To purge and skim away the filth of vice,
That so refined it might the more entice,
Then pour it on the morals of thy son,
To taint his heart was worthy of thine own!
Now, while the poison all high life pervades,
Write, if thou canst, one letter from the shades,
One, and one only, charged with deep regret,
That thy worst part, thy principles, live yet;
One sad epistle thence may cure mankind
Of the plague spread by bundles left behind.

'Tis granted, and no plainer truth appears,
Our most important are our earliest years;
The mind, impressible and soft, with ease
Imbibes and copies what she hears and sees,
And through life's labyrinth holds fast the clue
That Education gives her, false or true.
Plants raised with tenderness are seldom strong;
Man's coltish disposition asks the thong;
And without discipline the favourite child,
Like a neglected forester, runs wild.
But we, as if good qualities would grow
Spontaneous, take but little pains to sow;
We give some Latin, and a smatch of Greek;
Teach him to fence and figure twice a week;
And having done, we think, the best we can,
Praise his proficiency, and dub him man.

From school to Cam or Isis, and thence home;
And thence with all convenient speed to Rome,
With reverend tutor, clad in habit lay,
To tease for cash, and quarrel with all day;
With memorandum book for every town,
And every post, and where the chaise broke down;
His stock, a few French phrases got by heart,
With much to learn, but nothing to impart.
The youth, obedient to his sire's commands,
Sets off a wanderer into foreign lands.
Surprised at all they meet, the gosling pair,
With awkward gait, stretch'd neck, and silly stare,
Discover huge cathedrals built with stone,
And steeples towering high much like our own;

But show peculiar light by many a grin
At popish practices observed within.

Ere long some bowing, smirking, smart abbé
Remarks two loiterers that have lost their way;
And, being always primed with politesse
For men of their appearance and address,
With much compassion undertakes the task
To tell them more than they have wit to ask;
Points to inscriptions wheresoe'er they tread,
Such as, when legible, were never read,
But being canker'd now and half worn out,
Craze antiquarian brains with endless doubt;
Some headless hero, or some Cæsar shows—
Defective only in his Roman nose;
Exhibits elevations, drawings, plans,
Models of Herculean pots and pans;
And sells them medals, which, if neither rare
Nor ancient, will be so preserved with care.

Strange the recital! from whatever cause
His great improvement and new light he draws,
The squire, once bashful, is shamefaced no more,
But teems with powers he never felt before;
Whether increased momentum, and the force
With which from clime to clime he sped his course
(As axles sometimes kindle as they go),
Chafed him, and brought dull nature to a glow;
Or whether clearer skies and softer air,
That make Italian flowers so sweet and fair,
Freshening his lazy spirits as he ran,
Unfolded genially, and spread the man;

Returning, he proclaims, by many a grace,
By shrugs and strange contortions of his face,
How much a dunce, that has been sent to roam,
Excels a dunce that has been kept at home.

Accomplishments have taken virtue's place,
And wisdom falls before exterior grace :
We slight the precious kernel of the stone,
And toil to polish its rough coat alone.
A just deportment, manners graced with ease,
Elegant phrase, and figure form'd to please,
Are qualities that seem to comprehend
Whatever parents, guardians, schools, intend ;
Hence an unfurnish'd and a listless mind,
Though busy, trifling ; empty, though refined ;
Hence all that interferes, and dares to clash
With indolence and luxury, is trash ;
While learning, once the man's exclusive pride,
Seems verging fast towards the female side.
Learning itself, received into a mind
By nature weak, or viciously inclined,
Serves but to lead philosophers astray,
Where children would with ease discern the way.
And of all arts sagacious dupes invent,
To cheat themselves and gain the world's assent,
The worst is—Scripture warp'd from its intent.

The carriage bowls along, and all are pleased
If Tom be sober, and the wheels well greased ;
But if the rogue be gone a cup too far,
Left out his linchpin, or forgot his tar,
It suffers interruption and delay,
And meets with hindrance in the smoothest way.

When some hypothesis absurd and vain
Has fill'd with all its fumes a critic's brain,
The text that sorts not with his darling whim,
Though plain to others, is obscure to him.
The will made subject to a lawless force,
All is irregular, and out of course ;
And Judgment drunk, and bribed to lose his way,
Winks hard, and talks of darkness at noonday.

A critic on the sacred book should be
Candid and learn'd, dispassionate and free ;
Free from the wayward bias bigots feel,
From fancy's influence, and intemperate zeal ;
But above all (or let the wretch refrain,
Nor touch the page he cannot but profane),
Free from the domineering power of lust ;
A lewd interpreter is never just.

How shall I speak thee, or thy power address,
Thou god of our idolatry, the Press ?
By thee religion, liberty, and laws,
Exert their influence and advance their cause :
By thee worse plagues than Pharaoh's land befell,
Diffused, make Earth the vestibule of Hell ;
Thou fountain, at which drink the good and wise ;
Thou ever bubbling spring of endless lies ;
Like Eden's dread probationary tree,
Knowledge of good and evil is from thee.

No wild enthusiast ever yet could rest
Till half mankind were like himself possess'd.
Philosophers, who darken and put out
Eternal truth by everlasting doubt ;

Church quacks, with passions under no command,
Who fill the world with doctrines contraband,
Discoverers of they know not what, confined
Within no bounds—the blind that lead the blind ;
To streams of popular opinion drawn,
Deposit in those shallows all their spawn.
The wriggling fry soon fill the creeks around,
Poisoning the waters where their swarms abound.
Scorn'd by the nobler tenants of the flood,
Minnows and gudgeons gorge the unwholesome
food.

The propagated myriads spread so fast,
E'en Leuwenhoeck himself would stand aghast,
Employ'd to calculate the enormous sum,
And own his crab-computing powers o'ercome.
Is this hyperbole ? The world well known,
Your sober thoughts will hardly find it one.

Fresh confidence the speculatist takes
From every hair-brain'd proselyte he makes ;
And therefore prints : himself but half deceived,
Till others have the soothing tale believed.
Hence comment after comment spun as fine
As bloated spiders draw the flimsy line.
Hence the same word, that bids our lusts obey,
Is misapplied to sanctify their sway.
If stubborn Greek refuse to be his friend,
Hebrew or Syriac shall be forced to bend ;
If languages and copies all cry, No—
Somebody proved it centuries ago.
Like trout pursued, the critic in despair
Darts to the mud, and finds his safety there :

Women, whom custom has forbid to fly
The scholar's pitch (the scholar best knows why),
With all the simple and unletter'd poor,
Admire his learning, and almost adore.
Whoever errs, the priest can ne'er be wrong,
With such fine words familiar to his tongue.

Ye ladies ! (for, indifferent in your cause,
I should deserve to forfeit all applause)
Whatever shocks or gives the least offence
To virtue, delicacy, truth, or sense
(Try the criterion, 'tis a faithful guide),
Nor has, nor can have, Scripture on its side.

None but an author knows an author's cares,
Or Fancy's fondness for the child she bears.
Committed once into the public arms,
The baby seems to smile with added charms.
Like something precious ventured far from shore,
'Tis valued for the danger's sake the more.
He views it with complacency supreme,
Solicits kind attention to his dream ;
And daily, more enamour'd of the cheat,
Kneels, and asks Heaven to bless the dear deceit.
So one, whose story serves at least to show
Men loved their own productions long ago,
Woo'd an unfeeling statue for his wife,
Nor rested till the gods had given it life.
If some mere driveller suck the sugar'd rib,
One that still needs his leading string and fib,
And praise his genius, he is soon repaid
In praise applied to the same part—his head ;

For 'tis a rule that holds for ever true,
Grant me discernment, and I grant it you.

Patient of contradiction as a child,
Affable, humble, diffident, and mild ;
Such was Sir Isaac, and such Boyle and Locke ;
Your blunderer is as sturdy as a rock.
The creature is so sure to kick and bite,
A muleteer's the man to set him right.
First Appetite enlists him Truth's sworn foe,
Then obstinate Self-will confirms him so.
Tell him he wanders ; that his error leads
To fatal ills ; that, though the path he treads
Be flowery, and he see no cause of fear,
Death and the pains of hell attend him there :
In vain ; the slave of arrogance and pride,
He has no hearing on the prudent side.
His still refuted quirks he still repeats ;
New raised objections with new quibbles meets ;
Till sinking in the quicksand he defends,
He dies disputing, and the contest ends—
But not the mischiefs ; they, still left behind,
Like thistle-seeds, are sown by every wind.

Thus men go wrong with an ingenious skill ;
Bend the straight rule to their own crooked will ;
And with a clear and shining lamp supplied,
First put it out, then take it for a guide.
Halting on crutches of unequal size,
One leg by truth supported, one by lies ;
They sidle to the goal with awkward pace,
Secure of nothing—but to lose the race.

Faults in the life breed errors in the brain,
And these reciprocally those again.
The mind and conduct mutually imprint
And stamp their image in each other's mint ;
Each sire and dam, of an infernal race,
Begetting and conceiving all that's base.

None sends his arrow to the mark in view,
Whose hand is feeble, or his aim untrue.
For though, ere yet the shaft is on the wing,
Or when it first forsakes the elastic string,
It err but little from the intended line,
It falls at last far wide of his design ;
So he who seeks a mansion in the sky,
Must watch his purpose with a steadfast eye ;
That prize belongs to none but the sincere,
The least obliquity is fatal here.

With caution taste the sweet Circean cup ;
He that sips often, at last drinks it up.
Habits are soon assumed ; but when we strive
To strip them off, 'tis being flay'd alive.
Call'd to the temple of impure delight,
He that abstains, and he alone, does right.
If a wish wander that way, call it home ;
He cannot long be safe whose wishes roam.
But if you pass the threshold, you are caught ;
Die then, if power Almighty save you not.
There hardening by degress, till double steel'd,
Take leave of nature's God, and God reveal'd ;
Then laugh at all you trembled at before ;
And, joining the freethinkers' brutal roar,

Swallow the two grand nostrums they dispense—
That Scripture lies, and blasphemy is sense.
If clemency revolted by abuse
Be damnable, then damn'd without excuse.

Somedream that they can silence, when they will,
The storm of passion, and say, Peace, be still :
But “ Thus far and no farther,” when address'd
To the wild wave, or wilder human breast,
Implies authority that never can,
That never ought to be the lot of man.

But, muse, forbear ; long flights forebode a fall ;
Strike on the deep-toned chord the sum of all.

Hear the just law—the judgment of the skies !
He that hates truth shall be the dupe of lies ;
And he that will be cheated to the last,
Delusions strong as hell shall bind him fast.
But if the wanderer his mistake discern,
Judge his own ways, and sigh for a return,
Bewilder'd once, must he bewail his loss
For ever and for ever ? No—the cross !
There and there only (though the deist rave,
And atheist, if the Earth bear so base a slave) ;
There and there only is the power to save.
There no delusive hope invites despair ;
No mockery meets you, no deception there.
The spells and charms, that blinded you before,
All vanish there, and fascinate no more.

I am no preacher, let this hint suffice—
The cross once seen is death to every vice ;
Else he that hung there suffer'd all his pain,
Bled, groan'd, and agonized, and died in vain.

TRUTH.

Pensantur trutinâ. HOR. LIB. II. EP. 1.

MAN, on the dubious waves of error toss'd,
His ship half founder'd, and his compass lost,
Sees, far as human optics may command,
A sleeping fog, and fancies it dry land ;
Spreads all his canvass, every sinew plies ;
Pants for it, aims at it, enters it, and dies !
Then farewell all self-satisfying schemes,
His well built systems, philosophic dreams ;
Deceitful views of future bliss, farewell !
He reads his sentence at the flames of Hell.

Hard lot of man—to toil for the reward
Of virtue, and yet lose it ! Wherefore hard ?—
He that would win the race must guide his horse
Obedient to the customs of the course ;
Else, though unequal'd to the goal he flies,
A meaner than himself shall gain the prize.
Grace leads the right way : if you choose the wrong,
Take it and perish ; but restrain your tongue ;
Charge not, with light sufficient and left free,
Your wilful suicide on God's decree.

Oh how unlike the complex works of man
Heaven's easy, artless, unencumber'd plan !
No meretricious graces to beguile,
No clustering ornaments to clog the pile ;

From ostentation, as from weakness, free,
 It stands like the cerulean arch we see,
 Majestic in its own simplicity.
 Inscribed above the portal, from afar
 Conspicuous as the brightness of a star,
 Legible only by the light they give,
 Stand the soul-quickenng words—BELIEVE AND
 LIVE.

Too many, shock'd at what should charm them most,
 Despise the plain direction, and are lost.
 Heaven on such terms! (they cry with proud
 Incredible, impossible, and vain!— [disdain]
 Rebel, because 'tis easy to obey;
 And scorn, for its own sake, the gracious way.
 These are the sober, in whose cooler brains
 Some thought of immortality remains;
 The rest too busy or too gay to wait
 On the sad theme, their everlasting state,
 Sport for a day, and perish in a night;
 The foam upon the waters not so light.

Who judged the Pharisee? What odious cause
 Exposed him to the vengeance of the laws?
 Had he seduced a virgin, wrong'd a friend,
 Or stabb'd a man to serve some private end?
 Was blasphemy his sin? Or did he stray
 From the strict duties of the sacred day?
 Sit long and late at the carousing board?
 (Such were the sins with which he charged the Lord.)
 No—the man's morals were exact, what then?
 'Twas his ambition to be seen of men;

His virtues were his pride ; and that one vice
Made all his virtues gewgaws of no price ;
He wore them as fine trappings for a show,
A praying, synagogue-frequenting beau.

The self-applauding bird, the peacock, see—
Mark what a sumptuous pharisee is he !
Meridian sunbeams tempt him to unfold
His radiant glories, azure, green, and gold :
He treads as if, some solemn music near,
His measured step were govern'd by his ear ;
And seems to say—Ye meaner fowl, give place
I am all splendour, dignity, and grace !

Not so the pheasant on his charms presumes,
Though he too has a glory in his plumes.
He, Christianlike, retreats with modest mien
To the close copse, or far sequester'd green,
And shines without desiring to be seen.
The plea of works, as arrogant and vain,
Heaven turns from with abhorrence and disdain
Not more affronted by avow'd neglect,
Than by the mere dissembler's feign'd respect.
What is all righteousness that men devise ?
What—but a sordid bargain for the skies ?
But Christ as soon would abdicate his own,
As stoop from heaven to sell the proud a throne

His dwelling a recess in some rude rock ;
Book, beads, and maple dish, his meagre stock :
In shirt of hair and weeds of canvass dress'd,
Girt with a bell rope that the pope has bless'd ;
Adust with stripes told out for every crime,
And sore tormented long before his time ;

His prayer preferr'd to saints that cannot aid ;
His praise postponed, and never to be paid ;
See the sage hermit, by mankind admired,
With all that bigotry adopts inspired,
Wearing out life in his religious whim,
Till his religious whimsy wears out him.
His works, his abstinence, his zeal allow'd,
You think him humble—God accounts him proud.
High in demand, though lowly in pretence,
Of all his conduct this the genuine sense—
My penitential stripes, my streaming blood,
Have purchased heaven, and prove my title good.

Turn eastward now, and Fancy shall apply
To your weak sight her telescopic eye.
The bramin kindles on his own bare head
The sacred fire, self-torturing his trade !
His voluntary pains, severe and long,
Would give a barbarous air to British song ;
No grand inquisitor could worse invent,
Than he contrives to suffer well content.

Which is the saintlier worthy of the two ?
Past all dispute, yon anchorite, say you.
Your sentence and mine differ. What's a name ?
I say the bramin has the fairer claim.
If sufferings, scripture no where recommends,
Devised by self to answer selfish ends,
Give saintship, then all Europe must agree
Ten starveling hermits suffer less than he.

The truth is (if the truth may suit your ear,
And prejudice have left a passage clear)

Pride has attain'd its most luxuriant growth,
And poison'd every virtue in them both.
Pride may be pamper'd while the flesh grows lean
Humility may clothe an English dean ;
That grace was Cowper's—his, confess'd by all—
Though placed in golden Durham's second stal
Not all the plenty of a bishop's board,
His palace, and his lacqueys, and " My Lord,"
More nourish pride, that condescending vice,
Than abstinence, and beggary, and lice ;
It thrives in misery, and abundant grows :
In misery fools upon themselves impose.

But why before us protestants produce
An Indian mystic, or a French recluse ?
Their sin is plain ; but what have we to fear,
Reform'd and well instructed ? You shall hear

Yon ancient prude, whose wither'd features sho
She might be young some forty years ago,
Her elbows pinion'd close upon her hips,
Her head erect, her fan upon her lips,
Her eyebrows arch'd, her eyes both gone astray
To watch yon amorous couple in their play,
With bony and unkerchief'd neck defies
The rude inclemency of wintry skies,
And sails with lappet head and mincing airs
Duly at clink of bell to morning prayers.
To thrift and parsimony much inclined,
She yet allows herself that boy behind ;
The shivering urchin, bending as he goes,
With slipshod heels, and dewdrop at his nose,

His predecessor's coat advanced to wear,
Which future pages yet are doom'd to share,
Carries her Bible tuck'd beneath his arm,
And hides his hands to keep his fingers warm.

She, half an angel in her own account,
Doubts not hereafter with the saints to mount,
Though not a grace appears on strictest search,
But that she fasts, and, item, goes to church.
Conscious of age she recollects her youth,
And tells, not always with an eye to truth,
Who spann'd her waist, and who, where'er he came,
Scrawl'd upon glass Miss Bridget's lovely name ;
Who stole her slipper, fill'd it with tokay,
And drank the little bumper every day.
Of temper as envenom'd as an asp,
Censorious, and her every word a wasp ;
In faithful memory she records the crimes
Or real, or fictitious, of the times ;
Laughs at the reputations she has torn,
And holds them dangling at arm's length in scorn.

Such are the fruits of sanctimonious pride,
Of malice fed while flesh is mortified :
Take, Madam, the reward of all your prayers,
Where hermits and where bramins meet with theirs ;
Your portion is with them.—Nay, never frown,
But, if you please, some fathoms lower down.

Artist, attend—your brushes and your paint—
Produce them—take a chair—now draw a saint.
Oh sorrowful and sad ! the streaming tears
Channel her cheeks—a Niobe appears !

Is this a saint? Throw tints and all away—
True piety is cheerful as the day,
Will weep indeed and heave a pitying groan
For others' woes, but smiles upon her own.

What purpose has the King of saints in view?
Why falls the gospel like a gracious dew?
To call up plenty from the teeming earth,
Or curse the desert with a tenfold dearth?
Is it that Adam's offspring may be saved
From servile fear, or be the more enslaved?
To loose the links that gall'd mankind before,
Or bind them faster on, and add still more?
The freeborn Christian has no chains to prove,
Or, if a chain, the golden one of love:
No fear attends to quench his glowing fires,
What fear he feels his gratitude inspires.
Shall he, for such deliverance freely wrought,
Recompense ill? He trembles at the thought.
His master's interest and his own combined
Prompt every movement of his heart and mind:
Thought, word, and deed, his liberty evince,
His freedom is the freedom of a prince.

Man's obligations infinite, of course
His life should prove that he perceives their force;
His utmost he can render is but small—
The principle and motive all in all.
You have two servants—Tom, an arch, sly rogue,
From top to toe the Geta now in vogue,
Genteel in figure, easy in address,
Moves without noise, and swift as an express,

Reports a message with a pleasing grace,
Expert in all the duties of his place ;
Say, on what hinge does his obedience move ?
Has he a world of gratitude and love ?
No, not a spark—'tis all mere sharper's play ;
Helikes your house, your housemaid, and your pay ;
Reduce his wages, or get rid of her,
Tom quits you, with—Your most obedient, Sir.

The dinner served, Charles takes his usual stand,
Watches your eye, anticipates command ;
Sighs if perhaps your appetite should fail ;
And if he but suspects a frown, turns pale ;
Consults all day your interest and your ease,
Richly rewarded if he can but please ;
And, proud to make his firm attachment known ;
To save your life would nobly risk his own.

Now which stands highest in your serious
thought ?

Charles, without doubt, say you—and so he ought ;
One act, that from a thankful heart proceeds,
Excels ten thousand mercenary deeds.

Thus heaven approves as honest and sincere
The work of generous love and filial fear ;
But with averted eyes the omniscient Judge
Scorns the base hireling, and the slavish drudge.
Where dwell these matchless saints ? old Curio cries.
E'en at your side, Sir, and before your eyes,
The favour'd few—the enthusiasts you despise.
And pleased at heart because on holy ground
Sometimes a canting hypocrite is found,

Reproach a people with his single fall,
And cast his filthy raiment at them all.
Attend ! an apt similitude shall show
Whence springs the conduct that offends you so.

See where it smokes along the sounding plain,
Blown all aslant, a driving, dashing rain,
Peal upon peal redoubling all around,
Shakes it again and faster to the ground ;
Now flashing wide, now glancing as in play,
Swift beyond thought the lightnings dart away.
Ere yet it came the traveller urged his steed,
And hurried, but with unsuccessful speed ;
Now drench'd throughout, and hopeless of his case,
He drops the rein, and leaves him to his pace.
Suppose, unlook'd for in a scene so rude,
Long hid by interposing hill or wood,
Some mansion, neat and elegantly dress'd,
By some kind hospitable heart possess'd,
Offer him warmth, security, and rest ;
Think with what pleasure, safe and at his ease,
He hears the tempest howling in the trees ;
What glowing thanks his lips and heart employ,
While danger-pass'd is turn'd to present joy.
So fares it with the sinner, when he feels
A growing dread of vengeance at his heels :
His conscience, like a glassy lake before,
Lash'd into foaming waves begins to roar ;
The law grown clamorous, though silent long,
Arraigns him, charges him with every wrong—
Asserts the rights of his offended Lord,
And death or restitution is the word :

The last impossible, he fears the first,
And, having well deserved, expects the worst.
Then welcome refuge, and a peaceful home ;
Oh for a shelter from the wrath to come !
Crush me, ye rocks ; ye falling mountains, hide,
Or bury me in ocean's angry tide.—
The scrutiny of those all-seeing eyes
I dare not—And you need not, God replies ;
The remedy you want I freely give ;
The book shall teach you—read, believe, and live !
'Tis done—the raging storm is heard no more,
Mercy receives him on her peaceful shore :
And Justice, guardian of the dread command,
Drops the red vengeance from his willing hand,
A soul redeem'd demands a life of praise ;
Hence the complexion of his future days,
Hence a demeanour holy and unspeck'd,
And the world's hatred, as its sure effect.

Some lead a life unblameable and just,
Their own dear virtue their unshaken trust :
They never sin—or if (as all offend)
Some trivial slips their daily walk attend,
The poor are near at hand, the charge is small,
A slight gratuity atones for all.
For though the pope has lost his interest here,
And pardons are not sold as once they were,
No papist more desirous to compound,
Than some grave sinners upon English ground.
That plea refuted, other quirks they seek—
Mercy is infinite, and man is weak ;

The future shall obliterate the past,
And Heaven, no doubt, shall be their home at last.

Come, then—a still, small whisper in your ear—
He has no hope who never had a fear ;
And he that never doubted of his state,
He may perhaps—perhaps he may—too late.

The path to bliss abounds with many a snare ;
Learning is one, and wit, however rare.

The Frenchman, first in literary fame,
(Mention him if you please. Voltaire?—The same.)

With spirit, genius, eloquence, supplied,
Lived long, wrote much, laugh'd heartily, and died ;
The Scripture was his jest book, whence he drew
Bon mots to gall the Christian and the Jew ;
An infidel in health, but what when sick ?

Oh—then a text would touch him at the quick :

View him at Paris in his last career,
Surrounding throngs the demigod revere,
Exalted on his pedestal of pride,

And fumed with frankincense on every side,
He begs their flattery with his latest breath,
And, smother'd in't at last, is praised to death.

Yon cottager, who weaves at her own door,
Pillow and bobbins all her little store,
Content though mean, and cheerful if not gay,
Shuffling her threads about the livelong day,
Just earns a scanty pittance, and at night
Lies down secure, her heart and pocket light ;
She, for her humble sphere by nature fit,
Has little understanding, and no wit,

Receives no praise ; but, though her lot be such
(Toilsome and indigent), she renders much ;
Just knows and knows no more, her Bible true—
A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew ;
And in that charter reads with sparkling eyes
Her title to a treasure in the skies.
Oh, happy peasant ! Oh, unhappy bard !
His the mere tinsel, hers the rich reward ;
He praised perhaps for ages yet to come,
She never heard of half a mile from home :
He, lost in errors, his vain heart prefers,
She, safe in the simplicity of hers.

Not many wise, rich, noble, or profound
In science, win one inch of heavenly ground.
And is it not a mortifying thought
The poor should gain it, and the rich should not ?
No—the voluptuaries, who ne'er forget
One pleasure lost, lose heaven without regret ;
Regret would rouse them, and give birth to prayer,
Prayer would add faith, and faith would fix them
Not that the Former of us all in this, [there.
Or aught he does, is govern'd by caprice ;
The supposition is replete with sin,
And bears the brand of blasphemy burnt in.
Not so—the silver trumpet's heavenly call
Sounds for the poor, but sounds alike for all :
Kings are invited, and would kings obey,
No slaves on earth more welcome were than they ;
But royalty, nobility, and state,
Are such a dead preponderating weight,

That endless bliss (how strange soe'er it seem),
In counterpoise, flies up and kicks the beam.
'Tis open, and ye cannot enter—why?
Because ye will not, Conyers would reply—
And he says much that many may dispute
And cavil at with ease, but none refute.
Oh, bless'd effect of penury and want,
The seed sown there, how vigorous is the plant!
No soil like poverty for growth divine,
As leanest land supplies the richest wine.
Earth gives too little, giving only bread,
To nourish pride, or turn the weakest head:
To them the sounding jargon of the schools
Seems what it is—a cap and bells for fools:
The light they walk by, kindled from above,
Shows them the shortest way to life and love:
They, strangers to the controversial field,
Where deists, always foil'd, yet scorn to yield,
And never check'd by what impedes the wise,
Believe, rush forward, and possess the prize.

Envy, ye great, the dull unletter'd small:
Ye have much cause for envy—but not all.
We boast some rich ones whom the Gospel sways,
And one who wears a coronet and prays;
Like gleanings of an olive tree they show,
Here and there one upon the topmost bough.

How readily, upon the Gospel plan,
That question has its answer—What is man?
Sinful and weak, in every sense a wretch;
An instrument, whose chords upon the stretch,

And strain'd to the last screw that he can bear,
Yield only discord in his Maker's ear :
Once the blest residence of truth divine,
Glorious as Solyma's interior shrine,
Where, in his own oracular abode,
Dwelt visibly the light-creating God ;
But made long since, like Babylon of old,
A den of mischiefs never to be told :
And she, once mistress of the realms around,
Now scatter'd wide and no where to be found,
As soon shall rise and reascend the throne,
By native power and energy her own,
As nature, at her own peculiar cost,
Restore to man the glories he has lost.
Go—bid the winter cease to chill the year,
Replace the wandering comet in his sphere,
Then boast (but wait for that unhop'd for hour)
The self-restoring arm of human power.
But what is man in his own proud esteem ?
Hear him—himself the poet and the theme :
A monarch clothed with majesty and awe,
His mind his kingdom, and his will his law ;
Grace in his mien, and glory in his eyes,
Supreme on earth, and worthy of the skies,
Strength in his heart, dominion in his nod,
And, thunderbolts excepted, quite a God !
So sings he, charm'd with his own mind and form,
The song magnificent—the theme a worm !
Himself so much the source of his delight,
His Maker has no beauty in his sight.

See where he sits, contemplative and fix'd,
Pleasure and wonder in his features mix'd,
His passions tamed and all at his control,
How perfect the composure of his soul ;
Complacency has breathed a gentle gale
O'er all his thoughts, and swell'd his easy sail :
His books well trimm'd, and in the gayest style,
Like regimental coxcombs rank and file,
Adorn his intellects as well as shelves,
And teach him notions splendid as themselves :
The Bible only stands neglected there,
Though that of all most worthy of his care ;
And, like an infant troublesome awake,
Is left to sleep for peace and quiet sake.

What shall the man deserve of humankind,
Whose happy skill and industry combined
Shall prove (what argument could never yet)
The Bible an imposture and a cheat ?
The praises of the libertine profess'd,
The worst of men, and curses of the best.
Where should the living, weeping o'er his woes ;
The dying, trembling at the awful close ;
Where the betray'd, forsaken, and oppress'd,
The thousands whom the world forbids to rest,
Where should they find (those comforts at an end
The Scripture yields), or hope to find, a friend ?
Sorrow might muse herself to madness then,
And, seeking exile from the sight of men,
Bury herself in solitude profound,
Grow frantic with her pangs, and bite the ground.

Thus often Unbelief, grown sick of life,
Flies to the tempting pool, or felon knife.
The jury meet, the coroner is short,
And lunacy the verdict of the court.
Reverse the sentence, let the truth be known,
Such lunacy is ignorance alone ;
They knew not, what some bishops may not know,
That Scripture is the only cure of woe ;
That field of promise, how it flings abroad
Its odour o'er the Christian's thorny road !
The soul, reposing on assured relief,
Feels herself happy amidst all her grief,
Forgets her labour as she toils along,
Weeps tears of joy, and bursts into a song.

But the same word, that, like the polish'd share,
Ploughs up the roots of a believer's care,
Kills too the flowery weeds, where'er they grow,
That bind the sinner's Bacchanalian brow.
Oh, that unwelcome voice of heavenly love,
Sad messenger of mercy from above !
How does it grate upon his thankless ear,
Crippling his pleasures with the cramp of fear !
His will and judgment at continual strife,
That civil war embitters all his life ;
In vain he points his powers against the skies,
In vain he closes or averts his eyes,
Truth will intrude—she bids him yet beware ;
And shakes the sceptic in the scorner's chair.
Though various foes against the Truth combine,
Pride above all opposes her design ;

Pride, of a growth superior to the rest,
The subtlest serpent with the loftiest crest,
Swells at the thought, and, kindling into rage,
Would hiss the cherub Mercy from the stage.

And is the soul indeed so lost?—she cries,
Fallen from her glory, and too weak to rise?
Torpida and dull, beneath a frozen zone,
Has she no spark that may be deem'd her own?
Grant her indebted to what zealots call
Grace undeserved, yet surely not for all!
Some beams of rectitude she yet displays,
Some love of virtue, and some power to praise;
Can lift herself above corporeal things,
And, soaring on her own unborrow'd wings,
Possess herself of all that's good or true,
Assert the skies, and vindicate her due.
Past indiscretion is a venial crime,
And if the youth, unmellow'd yet by time,
Bore on his branch, luxuriant then and rude,
Fruits of a blighted size, austere and crude,
Maturer years shall happier stores produce,
And meliorate the well concocted juice.
Then, conscious of her meritorious zeal,
To Justice she may make her bold appeal,
And leave to Mercy, with a tranquil mind,
The worthless and unfruitful of mankind.
Hear then how mercy, slighted and defied,
Retorts the affront against the crown of pride.

Perish the virtue, as it ought, abhorr'd,
And the fool with it, who insults his Lord.

The atonement a Redeemer's love has wrought
Is not for you—the righteous need it not.
Seest thou yon harlot, wooing all she meets,
The worn-out nuisance of the public streets,
Herself from morn to night, from night to morn,
Her own abhorrence, and as much your scorn :
The gracious shower, unlimited and free,
Shall fall on her, when Heaven denies it thee.
Of all that wisdom dictates this the drift,
That man is dead in sin, and life a gift.

Is virtue then, unless of Christian growth,
Mere fallacy, or foolishness, or both ?
Ten thousand sages lost in endless woe,
For ignorance of what they could not know ?
That speech betrays at once a bigot's tongue,
Charge not a God with such outrageous wrong.
Truly, not I—the partial light men have,
My creed persuades me, well employ'd, may save ;
While he that scorns the noonday beam, perverse,
Shall find the blessing unimproved a curse.
Let heathen worthies, whose exalted mind
Left sensuality and dross behind,
Possess for me their undisputed lot,
And take unenvied the reward they sought.
But still in virtue of a Saviour's plea,
Not blind by choice, but destined not to see.
Their fortitude and wisdom were a flame
Celestial, though they knew not whence it came,
Derived from the same source of light and grace,
That guides the Christian in his swifter race ;

Their judge was conscience, and her rule their law.
That rule, pursued with reverence and with awe,
Led them, however faltering, faint, and slow,
From what they knew to what they wish'd to know.
But let not him that shares a brighter day
Traduce the splendour of a noontide ray,
Prefer the twilight of a darker time,
And deem his base stupidity no crime ;
The wretch, who slights the bounty of the skies,
And sinks, while favour'd with the means to rise,
Shall find them rated at their full amount,
The good he scorn'd all carried to account.

Marshaling all his terrors as he came,
Thunder, and earthquake, and devouring flame,
From Sinai's top Jehovah gave the law,
Life for obedience, death for every flaw.
When the great Sovereign would his will express,
He gives a perfect rule, what can he less ?
And guards it with a sanction as severe
As vengeance can inflict, or sinners fear :
Else his own glorious rights he would disclaim,
And man might safely trifle with his name.
He bids him glow with unremitting love
To all on Earth, and to himself above ;
Condemns the injurious deed, the slanderous
tongue,

The thought that meditates a brother's wrong :
Brings not alone the more conspicuous part,
His conduct, to the test, but tries his heart.

Hark ! universal nature shook and groan'd,
'Twas the last trumpet—see the Judge enthroned :

Rouse all your courage at your utmost need,
Now summon every virtue, stand and plead.
What ! silent ? Is your boasting heard no more ?
That self-renouncing wisdom, learn'd before,
Had shed immortal glories on your brow,
That all your virtues cannot purchase now.

All joy to the believer ! He can speak—
Trembling yet happy, confident yet meek.

Since the dear hour that brought me to thy foot,
And cut up all my follies by the root,
I never trusted in an arm but thine,
Nor hoped, but in thy righteousness divine :
My prayers and alms, imperfect and defiled,
Were but the feeble efforts of a child ;
Howe'er perform'd, it was their brightest part,
That they proceeded from a grateful heart :
Cleansed in thine own all-purifying blood,
Forgive their evil, and accept their good :
I cast them at thy feet—my only plea
Is what it was, dependence upon thee :
While struggling in the vale of tears below,
That never fail'd, nor shall it fail me now.
Angelic gratulations rend the skies,
Pride falls unpitied, never more to rise,
Humility is crown'd, and Faith receives the prize.

EXPOSTULATION.

Tantane, tam patiens, nullo certamine tolli
 Dona sines ? VIRG.

WHY weeps the muse for England ? What appears
 In England's case to move the muse to tears ?
 From side to side of her delightful isle
 Is she not clothed with a perpetual smile ?
 Can Nature add a charm, or Art confer
 A new found luxury, not seen in her ?
 Where under Heaven is pleasure more pursued,
 Or where does cold reflection less intrude ?
 Her fields a rich expanse of wavy corn,
 Pour'd out from Plenty's overflowing horn ;
 Ambrosial gardens, in which art supplies
 The fervour and the force of Indian skies ;
 Her peaceful shores, where busy Commerce waits
 To pour his golden tide through all her gates ;
 Whom fiery suns, that scorch the russet spice
 Of eastern groves, and oceans floor'd with ice
 Forbid in vain to push his daring way
 To darker climes, or climes of brighter day ;
 Whom the winds waft where'er the billows roll,
 From the World's girdle to the frozen pole ;
 The chariots bounding in her wheel-worn streets,
 Her vaults below, where every vintage meets ;

Her theatres, her revels, and her sports ;
The scenes to which not youth alone resorts,
But age, in spite of weakness and of pain,
Still haunts, in hope to dream of youth again ;
All speak her happy : let the muse look round
From East to West, no sorrow can be found ;
Or only what, in cottages confined,
Sighs unregarded to the passing wind.
Then wherefore weep for England ? What appears
In England's case to move the muse to tears ?

The prophet wept for Israel ; wish'd his eyes
Were fountains fed with infinite supplies ;
For Israel dealt in robbery and wrong ;
There were the scorner's and the slanderer's tongue ;
Oaths, used as playthings or convenient tools,
As interest bias'd knaves, or fashion fools ;
Adultery, neighing at his neighbour's door ;
Oppression, labouring hard to grind the poor ;
The partial balance and deceitful weight ;
The treacherous smile, a mask for secret hate ;
Hypocrisy, formality in prayer,
And the dull service of the lip were there.
Her women, insolent and self-caress'd,
By Vanity's unwearied finger dress'd,
Forgot the blush that virgin fears impart
To modest cheeks, and borrow'd one from art ;
Were just such trifles, without worth or use,
As silly pride and idleness produce ;
Curl'd, scented, furbelow'd, and flounced around,
With feet too delicate to touch the ground,

They stretch'd the neck, and roll'd the wanton eye,
And sigh'd for every fool that flutter'd by.

He saw his people slaves to every lust,
Lewd, avaricious, arrogant, unjust ;
He heard the wheels of an avenging God
Groan heavily along the distant road ;
Saw Babylon set wide her two-leaved brass
To let the military deluge pass ;
Jerusalem a prey, her glory soil'd,
Her princes captive, and her treasures spoil'd ;
Wept till all Israel heard his bitter cry,
Stamp'd with his foot, and smote upon his thigh ;
But wept, and stamp'd, and smote his thigh in vain,
Pleasure is deaf when told of future pain,
And sounds prophetic are too rough to suit
Ears long accusom'd to the pleasing lute :
They scorn'd his inspiration and his theme,
Pronounced him frantic, and his fears a dream ;
With self-indulgence wing'd the fleeting hours,
Till the foe found them, and down fell the towers.

Long time Assyria bound them in her chain,
Till penitence had purged the public stain,
And Cyrus, with relenting pity moved,
Return'd them happy to the land they loved ;
There, proof against prosperity, awhile
They stood the test of her ensnaring smile,
And had the grace in scenes of peace to show
The virtue they had learn'd in scenes of woe.
But man is frail, and can but ill sustain
A long immunity from grief and pain ;

And after all the joys that Plenty leads,
With tiptoe step Vice silently succeeds.

When he that ruled them with a shepherd's rod,
In form a man, in dignity a God,
Came, not expected in that humble guise,
To sift and search them with unerring eyes,
He found, conceal'd beneath a fair outside,
The filth of rottenness and worm of pride ;
Their piety a system of deceit,
Scripture employ'd to sanctify the cheat ;
The pharisee the dupe of his own art,
Self-idolized, and yet a knave at heart.

When nations are to perish in their sins,
'Tis in the church their leprosy begins ;
The priest, whose office is, with zeal sincere,
To watch the fountain and preserve it clear,
Carelessly nods and sleeps upon the brink,
While others poison what the flock must drink ;
Or, waking at the call of lust alone,
Infuses lies and errors of his own :
His unsuspecting sheep believe it pure ;
And, tainted by the very means of cure,
Catch from each other a contagious spot,
The foul forerunner of a general rot.
Then Truth is hush'd, that Heresy may preach ;
And all is trash that reason cannot reach ;
Then God's own image on the soul impress'd
Becomes a mockery and a standing jest ;
And faith, the root whence only can arise
The graces of a life that wins the skies,

Loses at once all value and esteem,
Pronounced by graybeards a pernicious dream :
Then Ceremony leads her bigots forth,
Prepared to fight for shadows of no worth ;
While truths, on which eternal things depend,
Find not, or hardly find, a single friend :
As soldiers watch the signal of command,
They learn to bow, to kneel, to sit, to stand ;
Happy to fill religion's vacant place
With hollow form, and gesture, and grimace.

Such, when the teacher of his church was there,
People and priest, the sons of Israel were ;
Stiff in the letter, lax in the design
And import, of their oracles divine ;
Their learning legendary, false, absurd,
And yet exalted above God's own word ;
They drew a curse from an intended good,
Puff'd up with gifts they never understood.
He judged them with as terrible a frown,
As if not love, but wrath, had brought him down :
Yet he was gentle as soft summer airs,
Had grace for others' sins, but none for theirs ;
Through all he spoke a noble plainness ran—
Rhetoric is artifice, the work of man ;
And tricks and turns, that fancy may devise,
Are far too mean for him that rules the skies.
The astonish'd vulgar trembled while he tore
The mask from faces never seen before ;
He stripp'd the impostors in the noonday sun,
Show'd that they follow'd all they seem'd to shun ;

Their prayers made public, their excesses kept
As private as the chambers where they slept ;
The temple and its holy rites profaned
By mummeries he that dwelt in it disdain'd ;
Uplifted hands, that at convenient times
Could act extortion and the worst of crimes,
Wash'd with a neatness scrupulously nice,
And free from every taint but that of vice.
Judgment, however tardy, mends her pace
When obstinacy once has conquer'd grace.
They saw distemper heal'd, and life restored,
In answer to the fiat of his word ;
Confess'd the wonder, and with daring tongue
Blasphemed the authority from which it sprung.
They knew, by sure prognostics seen on high,
The future tone and temper of the sky ;
But, grave dissemblers ! could not understand
That sin let loose speaks punishment at hand.

Ask now of history's authentic page,
And call up evidence from every age ;
Display with busy and laborious hand
The blessings of the most indebted land ;
What nation will you find, whose annals prove
So rich an interest in Almighty love ?
Where dwell they now, where dwelt in ancient day
A people planted, water'd, blest as they ?
Let Egypt's plagues and Canaan's woes proclaim
The favours pour'd upon the Jewish name ;
Their freedom purchased for them at the cost
Of all their hard oppressors valued most ;

Their title to a country not their own
Made sure by prodigies till then unknown ;
For them the states they left made waste and void ;
For them the states, to which they went, destroy'd ;
A cloud to measure out their march by day,
By night a fire to cheer the gloomy way ;
That moving signal summoning, when best,
Their host to move, and, when it stay'd, to rest.
For them the rocks dissolved into a flood,
The dews condensed into angelic food,
Their very garments sacred, old yet new,
And time forbid to touch them as he flew ;
Streams, swell'd above the bank, enjoin'd to stand
While they pass'd through to their appointed land ;
Their leader arm'd with meekness, zeal, and love,
And graced with clear credentials from above ;
Themselves secured beneath the Almighty wing ;
Their God their captain,* lawgiver, and king ;
Crown'd with a thousand victories, and at last
Lords of the conquer'd soil, there rooted fast,
In peace possessing what they won by war,
Their name far publish'd, and revered as far ;
Where will you find a race like theirs, endow'd
With all that man e'er wish'd, or heaven bestow'd ?

They, and they only, amongst all mankind,
Received the transcript of the eternal mind :
Were trusted with his own engraven laws,
And constituted guardians of his cause ;

* Vide Joshua v. 14.

Theirs were the prophets, theirs the priestly call,
And theirs by birth the Saviour of us all.
In vain the nations, that had seen them rise
With fierce and envious yet admiring eyes,
Had sought to crush them, guarded as they were
By power divine, and skill that could not err.
Had they maintain'd allegiance firm and sure,
And kept the faith immaculate and pure,
Then the proud eagles of all conquering Rome
Had found one city not to be o'ercome ;
And the twelve standards of the tribes unfurl'd
Had bid defiance to the warring world.
But grace abused brings forth the foulest deeds,
As richest soil the most luxuriant weeds.
Cured of the golden calves, their fathers' sin,
They set up self, that idol god within ;
View'd a deliverer with disdain and hate,
Who left them still a tributary state ;
Seized fast his hand, held out to set them free
From a worse yoke, and nail'd it to the tree :
There was the consummation and the crown,
The flower of Israel's infamy full blown ;
Thence date their sad declension, and their fall,
Their woes, not yet repeal'd, thence date them all.

Thus fell the best instructed in her day,
And the most favour'd land, look where we may.
Philosophy indeed on Grecian eyes
Had pour'd the day, and clear'd the Roman skies ;
In other climes perhaps creative art,
With power surpassing theirs, perform'd her part ;

Might give more life to marble, or might fill
The glowing tablets with a juster skill,
Might shine in fable, and grace idle themes
With all the embroidery of poetic dreams ;
'Twas theirs alone to dive into the plan
That truth and mercy had reveal'd to man ;
And, while the world beside, that plan unknown,
Deified useless wood or senseless stone.

They breathed in faith their well directed prayers,
And the true God, the God of truth, was theirs.

Their glory faded, and their race dispersed,
The last of nations now, though once the first ;
They warn and teach the proudest, would they learn,
Keep wisdom, or meet vengeance in your turn :
If we escaped not, if Heaven spared not us,
Peel'd, scatter'd, and exterminated thus ;
If vice received her retribution due,
When we were visited, what hope for you ?
When God arises with an awful frown
To punish lust, or pluck presumption down ;
When gifts perverted, or not duly prized,
Pleasure o'ervalued, and his grace despised,
Provoke the vengeance of his righteous hand,
To pour down wrath upon a thankless land :
He will be found impartially severe,
Too just to wink, or speak the guilty clear.

Oh Israel, of all nations most undone !
Thy diadem displaced, thy sceptre gone ;
Thy temple, once thy glory, fallen and rased,
And thou a worshipper e'en where thou mayst ;

Thy services, once holy without spot,
Mere shadows now, their ancient pomp forgot;
Thy Levites, once a consecrated host,
No longer Levites, and their lineage lost,
And thou thyself o'er every country sown,
With none on earth that thou canst call thine own;
Cry aloud, thou that sittest in the dust,
Cry to the proud, the cruel, and unjust;
Knock at the gates of nations, rouse their fears;
Say wrath is coming, and the storm appears;
But raise the shrillest cry in British ears.

What ails thee, restless as the waves that roar,
And fling their foam against thy chalky shore?
Mistress, at least while Providence shall please,
And trident-bearing queen of the wide seas—
Why, having kept good faith, and often shown
Friendship and truth to others, find'st thou none?
Thou that hast set the persecuted free,
None interposes now to succour thee.
Countries indebted to thy power, that shine
With light derived from thee, would smother thine:
Thy very children watch for thy disgrace,
A lawless brood, and curse thee to thy face.
Thy rulers load thy credit, year by year,
With sums Peruvian mines could never clear;
As if, like arches built with skilful hand,
The more 'twere press'd the firmer it would stand.

The cry in all thy ships is still the same,
Speed us away to battle and to fame.
Thy mariners explore the wild expanse,
Impatient to descry the flags of France:

But, though they fight as thine have ever fought,
Return ashamed without the wreaths they sought.
Thy senate is a scene of civil jar,
Chaos of contrarieties at war ;
Where sharp and solid, phlegmatic and light,
Discordant atoms meet, ferment, and fight ;
Where obstinacy takes his sturdy stand,
To disconcert what policy has plann'd ;
Where policy is busied all night long
In setting right what faction has set wrong ;
Where flails of oratory thresh the floor,
That yields them chaff and dust, and nothing more.
Thy rack'd inhabitants repine, complain,
Tax'd till the brow of labour sweats in vain ;
War lays a burden on the reeling state,
And peace does nothing to relieve the weight ;
Successive loads succeeding broils impose,
And sighing millions prophesy the close.

Is adverse providence, when ponder'd well,
So dimly writ, or difficult to spell,
Thou canst not read with readiness and ease
Providence adverse in events like these ?
Know then that heavenly wisdom on this ball
Creates, gives birth to, guides, consummates all ;
That, while laborious and quick thoughted man
Snuffs up the praise of what he seems to plan,
He first conceives, then perfects his design,
As a mere instrument in hands divine :
Blind to the working of that secret power
That balances the wings of every hour,

The busy trifler dreams himself alone,
Frames many a purpose, and God works his own.
States thrive or wither as moons wax and wane,
E'en as his will and his decrees ordain ;
While honour, virtue, piety, bear sway,
They flourish ; and, as these decline, decay :
In just resentment of his injured laws,
He pours contempt on them, and on their cause ;
Strikes the rough thread of error right athwart
The web of every scheme they have at heart ;
Bids rottenness invade and bring to dust
The pillars of support, in which they trust,
And do his errand of disgrace and shame
On the chief strength and glory of the frame.
None ever yet impeded what he wrought,
None bars him out from his most secret thought :
Darkness itself before his eye is light,
And hell's close mischief naked in his sight.

Stand now and judge thyself—Hast thou incurr'd
His anger who can waste thee with a word,
Who poises and proportions sea and land,
Weighing them in the hollow of his hand,
And in whose awful sight all nations seem
As grasshoppers, as dust, a drop, a dream ?
Hast thou (a sacrilege his soul abhors)
Claim'd all the glory of thy prosperous wars ?
Proud of thy fleets and armies, stolen the gem
Of his just praise, to lavish it on them ?
Hast thou not learn'd, what thou art often told,
A truth still sacred, and believed of old,

That no success attends on spears and swords
Unblest, and that the battle is the Lord's?
That courage is his creature; and dismay
The post, that at his bidding speeds away,
Ghastly in feature, and his stammering tongue
With doleful rumour and sad presage hung,
To quell the valour of the stoutest heart,
And teach the combatant a woman's part?
That he bids thousands fly when none pursue,
Saves as he will by many or by few,
And claims for ever, as his royal right,
The event and sure decision of the fight?

Hast thou, though suckled at fair freedom's
Exported slavery to the conquer'd East? [breast,
Pull'd down the tyrants India served with dread,
And raised thyself, a greater, in their stead?
Gone thither arm'd and hungry, return'd full,
Fed from the richest veins of the Mogul,
A despot big with power obtain'd by wealth,
And that obtain'd by rapine and by stealth?
With Asiatic vices stored thy mind,
But left their virtues and thine own behind?
And, having truck'd thy soul, brought home the fee,
To tempt the poor to sell himself to thee?

Hast thou by statute shov'd from its design
The Saviour's feast, his own blest bread and wine,
And made the symbols of atoning grace
An office key, a picklock to a place,
That infidels may prove their title good
By an oath dipp'd in sacramental blood?

A blot that will be still a blot, in spite
Of all that grave apologists may write ;
And though a bishop toil to cleanse the stain,
He wipes and scours the silver cup in vain.
And hast thou sworn on every slight pretence,
Till perjuries are common as bad pence,
While thousands, careless of the damning sin,
Kiss the book's outside, who ne'er look within ?

Hast thou, when heaven has clothed thee with
disgrace,

And, long provoked, repaid thee to thy face
(For thou hast known eclipses, and endured
Dimness and anguish, all thy beams obscured,
When sin has shed dishonour on thy brow ;
And never of a sabler hue than now),
Hast thou, with heart perverse and conscience
Despising all rebuke, still persevered, [sear'd.
And having chosen evil, scorn'd the voice
That cried, Repent !—and gloried in thy choice ?
Thy fastings, when calamity at last
Suggests the expedient of a yearly fast,
What mean they ? Canst thou dream there is a power
In lighter diet at a later hour,
To charm to sleep the threatening of the skies,
And hide past folly from all-seeing eyes ?
The fast that wins deliverance, and suspends
The stroke that a vindictive God intends,
Is to renounce hypocrisy ; to draw
Thy life upon the pattern of the law ;

To war with pleasure, idolized before ;
To vanquish lust, and wear its yoke no more.
All fasting else, whate'er be the pretence,
Is wooing mercy by renew'd offence.

Hast thou within thee sin, that in old time
Brought fire from heaven, the sex-abusing crime,
Whose horrid perpetration stamps disgrace,
Baboons are free from, upon human race ?
Think on the fruitful and well water'd spot
That fed the flocks and herds of wealthy Lot,
Where Paradise seem'd still vouchsafed on earth,
Burning and scorch'd into perpetual dearth,
Or, in his words who damn'd the base desire,
Suffering the vengeance of eternal fire :
Then nature injured, scandalized, defiled,
Unveil'd her blushing cheek, look'd on, and smiled ;
Beheld with joy the lovely scene defaced,
And praised the wrath that laid her beauties waste.

Far be the thought from any verse of mine,
And farther still the form'd and fix'd design,
To thrust the charge of deeds that I detest
Against an innocent unconscious breast ;
The man that dares traduce, because he can
With safety to himself, is not a man :
An individual is a sacred mark,
Not to be pierced in play, or in the dark ;
But public censure speaks a public foe,
Unless a zeal for virtue guide the blow.

The priestly brotherhood, devout, sincere,
From mean self-interest and ambition clear,

Their hope in heaven, servility their scorn,
Prompt to persuade, expostulate, and warn,
Their wisdom pure, and given them from above,
Their usefulness ensured by zeal and love,
As meek as the man Moses, and withal
As bold as in Agrippa's presence Paul,
Should fly the world's contaminating touch,
Holy and unpolluted :—are thine such ?
Except a few with Eli's spirit blest,
Hophni and Phineas may describe the rest.

Where shall a teacher look, in days like these,
For ears and hearts that he can hope to please ?
Look to the poor—the simple and the plain
Will hear perhaps thy salutary strain :
Humility is gentle, apt to learn,
Speak but the word, will listen and return.
Alas, not so ! the poorest of the flock
Are proud, and set their faces as a rock ;
Denied that earthly opulence they choose,
God's better gift they scoff at and refuse.
The rich, the produce of a nobler stem,
Are more intelligent at least, try them.
Oh vain inquiry ! they without remorse
Are altogether gone a devious course ;
Where beckoning pleasure leads them, wildly stray ;
Have burst the bands, and cast the yoke away.

Now borne upon the wings of truth sublime,
Review thy dim original and prime.
This island, spot of unreclaim'd rude earth,
The cradle that received thee at thy birth,

Was rock'd by many a rough Norwegian blast,
And Danish howlings scared thee as they pass'd;
For thou wast born amid the din of arms,
And suck'd a breast that panted with alarms.
While yet thou wast a groveling puling chit,
Thy bones not fashion'd, and thy joints not knit,
The Roman taught thy stubborn knee to bow,
Though twice a Cæsar could not bend thee now.
His victory was that of orient light,
When the sun's shafts disperse the gloom of night.
Thy language at this distant moment shows
How much the country to the conqueror owes;
Expressive, energetic, and refined,
It sparkles with the gems he left behind :
He brought thy land a blessing when he came,
He found thee savage, and he left thee tame;
Taught thee to clothe thy pink'd and painted hide,
And grace thy figure with a soldier's pride;
He sow'd the seeds of order where he went,
Improved thee far beyond his own intent,
And, while he ruled thee by the sword alone,
Made thee at last a warrior like his own.
Religion, if in heavenly truths attired,
Needs only to be seen to be admired;
But thine, as dark as witcheries of the night,
Was form'd to harden hearts and shock the sight;
Thy Druids struck the well strung harps they bore
With fingers deeply dyed in human gore;
And while the victim slowly bled to death,
Upon the rolling chords rung out his dying breath.

Who brought the lamp that with awaking beams
Dispell'd thy gloom, and broke away thy dreams,
Tradition, now decrepit and worn out,
Babbler of ancient fables, leaves a doubt :
But still light reach'd thee ; and those gods of thine,
Woden and Thor, each tottering in his shrine,
Fell broken and defaced at their own door,
As Dagon in Philistia long before.
But Rome with sorceries and magic wand
Soon raised a cloud that darken'd every land ;
And thine was smother'd in the stench and fog
Of Tiber's marshes and the papal bog. [crowns,
Then priests with bulls and briefs, and shaven
And griping fists, and unrelenting frowns,
Legates and delegates with powers from hell,
Though heavenly in pretension, fleeced thee well ;
And to this hour, to keep it fresh in mind,
Some twigs of that old scourge are left behind.*
Thy soldiery, the pope's well managed pack,
Were train'd beneath his lash, and knew the smack,
And, when he laid them on the scent of blood,
Would hunt a Saracen through fire and flood.
Lavish of life, to win an empty tomb,
That proved a mint of wealth, a mine to Rome,
They left their bones beneath unfriendly skies,
His worthless absolution all the prize.
Thou wast the veriest slave, in days of yore,
That ever dragg'd a chain or tugg'd an oar ;

* Which may be found at Doctors' Commons.

Thy monarchs arbitrary, fierce, unjust,
Themselves the slaves of bigotry or lust,
Disdain'd thy counsels, only in distress
Found thee a goodly sponge for power to press.
Thy chiefs, the lords of many a petty fee,
Provoked and harass'd, in return plagued thee;
Call'd thee away from peaceable employ,
Domestic happiness and rural joy,
To waste thy life in arms, or lay it down
In causeless feuds and bickerings of their own.
Thy parliaments adored, on bended knees,
The sovereignty they were convened to please;
Whate'er was ask'd, too timid to resist,
Complied with, and were graciously dismiss'd;
And if some Spartan soul a doubt express'd,
And, blushing at the tameness of the rest,
Dared to suppose the subject had a choice,
He was a traitor by the general voice.
Oh slave! with powers thou didst not dare exert,
Verse cannot stoop so low as thy desert;
It shakes the sides of splenetic disdain,
Thou self-entitled ruler of the main,
To trace thee to the date when yon fair sea,
That clips thy shores, had no such charms for thee;
When other nations flew from coast to coast,
And thou hadst neither fleet nor flag to boast.
Kneel now, and lay thy forehead in the dust;
Blush if thou canst; not petrified, thou must:
Act but an honest and a faithful part;
Compare what then thou wast with what thou art;

And God's disposing providence confess'd,
Obduracy itself must yield the rest.—
Then thou art bound to serve him, and to prove,
Hour after hour, thy gratitude and love.

Has he not hid thee, and thy favour'd land,
For ages safe beneath his sheltering hand,
Given thee his blessing on the clearest proof,
Bid nations leagued against thee stand aloof,
And charged hostility and hate to roar
Where else they would, but not upon thy shore?
His power secured thee, when presumptuous Spain
Baptized her fleet invincible in vain;
Her gloomy monarch, doubtful and resign'd
To every pang that racks an anxious mind,
Ask'd of the waves that broke upon his coast,
What tidings? and the surge replied—All lost!
And when the Stuart, leaning on the Scot,
Then too much fear'd, and now too much forgot,
Pierced to the very centre of the realm,
And hoped to seize his abdicated helm,
'Twas but to prove how quickly, with a frown,
He that had raised thee could have pluck'd thee
Peculiar is the grace by thee possess'd, [down.
Thy foes implacable, thy land at rest;
Thy thunders travel over earth and seas,
And all at home is pleasure, wealth, and ease.
'Tis thus, extending his tempestuous arm,
Thy Maker fills the nations with alarm,
While his own heaven surveys the troubled scene,
And feels no change, unshaken and serene.

Freedom, in other lands scarce known to shine;
Pours out a flood of splendour upon thine;
Thou hast as bright an interest in her rays
As ever Roman had in Rome's best days.
True freedom is where no restraint is known
That Scripture, justice, and good sense disown.
Where only vice and injury are tied,
And all from shore to shore is free beside.
Such freedom is—and Windsor's hoary towers
Stood trembling at the boldness of thy powers,
That won a nymph on that immortal plain,
Like her the fabled Phœbus woo'd in vain:
He found the laurel only—happier you
The unfading laurel, and the virgin too!*

Now think, if pleasure have a thought to spare;
If God himself be not beneath her care;
If business, constant as the wheels of time,
Can pause an hour to read a serious rhyme;
If the new mail thy merchants now receive,
Or expectation of the next give leave;
Oh think, if chargeable with deep arrears
For such indulgence gilded all thy years,
How much, though long neglected, shining yet,
The beams of heavenly truth have swell'd the debt.
When persecuting zeal made royal sport
With tortured innocence in Mary's court,
And Bonner, blithe as shepherd at a wake,
Enjoy'd the show, and danced about the stake;

* Alluding to the grant of Magna Charta, which was extorted from King John by the barons at Runnymede near Windsor.

The sacred book, its value understood,
Received the seal of martyrdom in blood.
Those holy men, so full of truth and grace,
Seem to reflection of a different race,
Meek, modest, venerable, wise, sincere,
In such a cause they could not dare to fear ;
They could not purchase earth with such a prize,
Or spare a life too short to reach the skies.
From them to thee convey'd along the tide,
Their streaming hearts pour'd freely when they
died ;

Those truths, which neither use nor years impair,
Invite thee, woo thee, to the bliss they share.
What dotage will not vanity maintain ?
What web too weak to catch a modern brain ?
The moles and bats in full assembly find,
On special search, the keen eyed eagle blind.
And did they dream, and art thou wiser now ?
Prove it—if better, I submit and bow.
Wisdom and goodness are twin-born, one heart
Must hold both sisters, never seen apart.
So then—as darkness overspread the deep,
Ere nature rose from her eternal sleep,
And this delightful earth, and that fair sky,
Leap'd out of nothing, call'd by the Most High ;
By such a change thy darkness is made light,
Thy chaos order, and thy weakness might ;
And he, whose power mere nullity obeys,
Who found thee nothing, form'd thee for his praise.
To praise him is to serve him, and fulfil,
Doing and suffering, his unquestion'd will ;

'Tis to believe what men inspired of old,
Faithful, and faithfully inform'd, unfold ;
Candid and just, with no false aim in view,
To take for truth what cannot but be true ;
To learn in God's own school the Christian part,
And bind the task assign'd thee to thine heart :
Happy the man there seeking and there found,
Happy the nation where such men abound !

How shall a verse impress thee ? by what name
Shall I abjure thee not to court thy shame ?
By theirs whose bright example, unimpeach'd,
Directs thee to that eminence they reach'd,
Heroes and worthies of days past, thy sires ?
Or his, who touch'd their hearts with hallow'd fires ?
Their names, alas ! in vain reproach an age,
Whom all the vanities they scorn'd engage ;
And his, that seraphs tremble at, is hung
Disgracefully on every trifler's tongue,
Or serves the champion in forensic war
To flourish and parade with at the bar.
Pleasure herself perhaps suggests a plea,
If interest move thee, to persuade e'en thee ;
By every charm that smiles upon her face,
By joys possess'd, and joys still held in chase,
If dear society be worth a thought,
And if the feast of freedom cloy thee not,
Reflect that these, and all that seems thine own,
Held by the tenure of his will alone,
Like angels in the service of their Lord,
Remain with thee, or leave thee at his word !

That gratitude and temperance in our use
Of what he gives, unsparing and profuse,
Secure the favour, and enhance the joy,
That thankless waste and wild abuse destroy.
But above all reflect, how cheap soe'er
Those rights, that millions envy thee, appear,
And though resolved to risk them, and swim down
The tide of pleasure, heedless of his frown,
That blessings truly sacred, and when given
Mark'd with the signature and stamp of Heaven,
The word of prophecy, those truths divine,
Which make that Heaven, if thou desire it, thine,
(Awful alternative ! believed, beloved,
Thy glory, and thy shame if unimproved),
Are never long vouchsafed, if push'd aside
With cold disgust or philosophic pride ;
And that, judicially withdrawn, disgrace,
Error, and darkness occupy their place.

A world is up in arms, and thou, a spot
Not quickly found, if negligently sought,
Thy soul as ample as thy bounds are small,
Endurest the brunt, and darest defy them all ;
And wilt thou join to this bold enterprise
A bolder still, a contest with the skies ?
Remember, if he guard thee and secure,
Whoe'er assails thee, thy success is sure ;
But if He leave thee, though the skill and power
Of nations, sworn to spoil thee and devour,
Were all collected in thy single arm,
And thou couldst laugh away the fear of harm,

That strength would fail, opposed against the push
And feeble onset of a pigmy rush.

Say not (and if the thought of such defence
Should spring within thy bosom, drive it thence)
What nation amongst all my foes is free
From crimes as base as any charged on me?
Their measure fill'd, they too shall pay the debt,
Which God, though long forboren, will not forget.
But know that wrath divine, when most severe,
Makes justice still the guide of his career,
And will not punish, in one mingled crowd,
Them without light, and thee without a cloud.

Muse, hang this harp upon yon aged beech,
Still murmuring with the solemn truths I teach;
And while at intervals a cold blast sings
Through the dry leaves, and pants upon the strings,
My soul shall sigh in secret, and lament
A nation scourged, yet tardy to repent.
I know the warning song is sung in vain;
That few will hear, and fewer heed the strain;
But if a sweeter voice, and one design'd
A blessing to my country and mankind,
Reclaim the wandering thousands, and bring home
A flock so scatter'd and so wont to roam,
Then place it once again between my knees;
The sound of truth will then be sure to please;
And truth alone, where'er my life be cast,
In scenes of plenty, or the pining waste,
Shall be my chosen theme, my glory to the last.

H O P E.

. doceas iter, et sacra ostia pandas.

VIRG. EN. 6.

Ask what is human life—the sage replies,
 With disappointment lowering in his eyes,
 A painful passage o'er a restless flood,
 A vain pursuit of fugitive false good,
 A scene of fancied bliss and heart-felt care,
 Closing at last in darkness and despair.
 The poor, inured to drudgery and distress,
 Act without aim, think little, and feel less,
 And no where, but in feign'd Arcadian scenes,
 Taste happiness, or know what pleasure means.
 Riches are pass'd away from hand to hand,
 As fortune, vice, or folly may command ;
 As in a dance the pair that take the lead
 Turn downward, and the lowest pair succeed,
 So shifting and so various is the plan
 By which Heaven rules the mix'd affairs of man ;
 Vicissitude wheels round the motley crowd,
 The rich grow poor, the poor become purse-proud ;
 Business is labour, and man's weakness such,
 Pleasure is labour too, and tires as much,
 The very sense of it foregoes its use,
 By repetition pall'd, by age obtuse.

Youth lost in dissipation we deplore,
Through life's sad remnant, what no sighs restore ;
Our years, a fruitless race without a prize,
Too many, yet too few to make us wise.

Dangling his cane about, and taking snuff,
Lothario cries, What philosophic stuff—
O querulous and weak !—whose useless brain
Once thought of nothing, and now thinks in vain ;
Whose eye reverted weeps o'er all the past,
Whose prospect shows thee a disheartening waste ;
Would age in thee resign his wintry reign,
And youth invigorate that frame again,
Renew'd desire would grace with other speech
Joys always prized, when placed within our reach.

For lift thy palsied head, shake off the gloom
That overhangs the borders of thy tomb,
See nature gay, as when she first began
With smiles alluring her admirer man ;
She spreads the morning over eastern hills,
Earth glitters with the drops the night distills ;
The sun, obedient, at her call appears
To fling his glories o'er the robe she wears ;
Banks clothed with flowers, groves fill'd with
 sprightly sounds,
The yellow tilth, green meads, rocks, rising grounds,
Streams edged with osiers, fattening every field
Where'er they flow, now seen and now conceal'd ;
From the blue rim, where skies and mountains
Down to the very turf beneath thy feet, [meet,
Ten thousand charms, that only fools despise,
Or pride can look at with indifferent eyes,

All speak one language, all with one sweet voice
Cry to her universal realm, Rejoice !
Man feels the spur of passions and desires,
And she gives largely more than he requires ;
Not that his hours devoted all to care,
Hollow-eyed abstinence, and lean despair,
The wretch may pine, while to his smell, taste,
She holds a paradise of rich delight ; [sight,
But gently to rebuke his awkward fear,
To prove that what she gives she gives sincere,
To banish hesitation, and proclaim
His happiness, her dear, her only aim.
'Tis grave philosophy's absurdest dream,
That Heaven's intentions are not what they seem,
That only shadows are dispensed below,
And earth has no reality but woe.

Thus things terrestrial wear a different hue,
As youth or age persuades ; and neither true.
So Flora's wreath through colour'd crystal seen,
The rose or lily appears blue or green,
But still the imputed tints are those alone
The medium represents, and not their own.

To rise at noon, sit slipshod and undress'd,
To read the news, or fiddle, as seems best,
Till half the world comes rattling at his door,
To fill the dull vacuity till four ;
And, just when evening turns the blue vault gray,
To spend two hours in dressing for the day ;
To make the sun a bauble without use,
Save for the fruits his heavenly beams produce ;

Quite to forget, or deem it worth no thought,
Who bids him shine, or if he shine or not ;
Through mere necessity to close his eyes
Just when the larks and when the shepherds rise ;
Is such a life, so tediously the same,
So void of all utility or aim,
That poor Jonquil, with almost every breath,
Sighs for his exit, vulgarly called death :
For he, with all his follies, has a mind
Not yet so blank, or fashionably blind,
But now and then perhaps a feeble ray
Of distant wisdom shoots across his way ;
By which he reads, that life without a plan,
As useless as the moment it began,
Serves merely as a soil for discontent
To thrive in ; an incumbrance ere half spent.
Oh ! weariness beyond what asses feel,
That tread the circuit of the cistern wheel ;
A dull rotation, never at a stay,
Yesterday's face twin image of to-day ;
While conversation, an exhausted stock,
Grows drowsy as the clicking of a clock.
No need, he cries, of gravity stuff'd out
With academic dignity devout,
To read wise lectures, vanity the text :
Proclaim the remedy, ye learned, next ;
For truth self-evident, with pomp impress'd,
Is vanity surpassing all the rest.

That remedy, not hid in deeps profound,
Yet seldom sought where only to be found,

While passion turns aside from its due scope
The inquirer's aim, that remedy is hope.
Life is his gift, from whom whate'er life needs,
With every good and perfect gift, proceeds;
Bestow'd on man, like all that we partake,
Royally, freely, for his bounty's sake;
Transient indeed, as is the fleeting hour,
And yet the seed of an immortal flower;
Design'd, in honour of his endless love,
To fill with fragrance his abode above;
No trifle, howsoever short it seem,
And, howsoever shadowy, no dream;
Its value, what no thought can ascertain,
Nor all an angel's eloquence explain,
Men deal with life as children with their play,
Who first misuse, then cast their toys away;
Live to no sober purpose, and contend
That their Creator had no serious end.
When God and man stand opposite in view,
Man's disappointment must of course ensue.
The just Creator condescends to write,
In beams of inextinguishable light,
His names of wisdom, goodness, power, and love,
On all that blooms below, or shines above;
To catch the wandering notice of mankind,
And teach the world, if not perversely blind,
His gracious attributes, and prove the share
His offspring hold in his paternal care.
If, led from earthly things to things divine,
His creature thwart not his august design,

Then praise is heard instead of reasoning pride,
And captious cavil and complaint subside.
Nature, employ'd in her allotted place,
Is handmaid to the purposes of grace ;
By good vouchsafed makes known superior good,
And bliss not seen by blessings understood :
That bliss, reveal'd in scripture, with a glow
Bright as the covenant-ensuring bow,
Fires all his feelings with a noble scorn
Of sensual evil, and thus Hope is born.

Hope sets the stamp of vanity on all
That men have deem'd substantial since the fall,
Yet has the wondrous virtue to educe.
From emptiness itself a real use ;
And while she takes, as at a father's hand,
What health and sober appetite demand,
From fading good derives, with chemic art,
That lasting happiness, a thankful heart.
Hope, with uplifted foot, set free from earth,
Pants for the place of her ethereal birth,
On steady wings sails through the immense abyss
Plucks amaranthine joys from bowers of bliss,
And crowns the soul, while yet a mourner here,
With wreaths like those triumphant spirits wear.
Hope, as an anchor firm and sure, holds fast
The Christian vessel, and defies the blast.
Hope ! nothing else can nourish and secure
His new-born virtues, and preserve him pure.
Hope ! let the wretch, once conscious of the joy,
Whom now despairing agonies destroy,

Speak, for he can, and none so well as he,
What treasures centre, what delights in thee.
Had he the gems, the spices, and the land,
That boasts the treasure, all at his command ;
The fragrant grove, the inestimable-mine
Werelight, when weigh'd against one smile of thine.

Though clasp'd and cradled in his nurse's arms,
He shines with all a cherub's artless charms.
Man is the genuine offspring of revolt,
Stubborn and sturdy, a wild ass's colt ;
His passions, like the watery stores that sleep
Beneath the smiling surface of the deep,
Wait but the lashes of a wintry storm,
To frown and roar, and shake his feeble form.
From infancy through childhood's giddy maze,
Froward at school, and fretful in his plays,
The puny tyrant burns to subjugate
The free republic of the whip-gig state.
If one, his equal in athletic frame,
Or, more provoking still, of nobler name,
Dare step across his arbitrary views,
An Iliad, only not in verse, ensues :
The little Greeks look trembling at the scales,
Till the best tongue, or heaviest hand prevails.

Now see him launch'd into the world at large ;
If priest, supinely droning o'er his charge,
Their fleece his pillow, and his weekly drawl,
Though short, too long, the price he pays for all.
If lawyer, loud whatever cause he plead,
But proudest of the worst, if that succeed.

Perhaps a grave physician, gathering fees,
Punctually paid for lengthening out disease ;
No Cotton, whose humanity sheds rays,
That make superior skill his second praise.
If arms engage him, he devotes to sport
His date of life so likely to be short ;
A soldier may be any thing, if brave,
So may a tradesman, if not quite a knave.
Such stuff the world is made of ; and mankind
To passion, interest, pleasure, whim, resign'd,
Insist on, as if each were his own pope,
Forgiveness, and the privilege of hope ;
But conscience, in some awful silent hour,
When captivating lusts have lost their power,
Perhaps when sickness, or some fearful dream,
Reminds him of religion, hated theme !
Starts from the down, on which she lately slept,
And tells of laws despised, at least not kept ;
Shows with a pointing finger, but no noise,
A pale procession of past sinful joys,
All witnesses of blessings foully scorn'd,
And life abused, and not to be suborn'd.
Mark these, she says ; these, summon'd from afar,
Begin their march to meet thee at the bar ;
There find a judge inexorably just,
And perish there as all presumption must.

Peace be to those (such peace as earth can give)
Who live in pleasure, dead e'en while they live ;
Born capable indeed of heavenly truth ;
But down to latest age, from earliest youth,

Their mind a wilderness through want of care,
The plough of wisdom never entering there.
Peace (if insensibility may claim
A right to the meek honours of her name)
To men of pedigree, their noble race,
Emulous always of the nearest place
To any throne, except the throne of grace.
Let cottagers and unenlighten'd swains
Revere the laws they dream that heaven ordains ;
Resort on Sundays to the house of prayer,
And ask, and fancy they find, blessings there.
Themselves, perhaps, when weary they retreat
To enjoy cool nature in a country seat,
To exchange the centre of a thousand trades,
For clumps, and lawns, and temples, and cascades,
May now and then their velvet cushions take,
And seem to pray for good example sake ;
Judging, in charity no doubt, the town
Pious enough, and having need of none.
Kind souls ! to teach their tenantry to prize
What they themselves, without remorse, despise :
Nor hope have they, nor fear of aught to come,
As well for them had prophecy been dumb ;
They could have held the conduct they pursue,
Had Paul of Tarsus lived and died a Jew ;
And truth, proposed to reasoners wise as they,
Is a pearl cast—completely cast away.

They die.—Death lends them, pleased, and as
in sport,
All the grim honours of his ghastly court.

Far other paintings grace the chamber now,
Where late we saw the mimic landscape glow :
The busy heralds hang the sable scene
With mournful scutcheons, and dim lamps between;
Proclaim their titles to the crowd around,
But they that wore them move not at the sound ;
The coronet, placed idly at their head,
Adds nothing now to the degraded dead ;
And e'en the star, that glitters on the bier,
Can only say—Nobility lies here.
Peace to all such—'twere pity to offend,
By useless censure, whom we cannot mend ;
Life without hope can close but in despair,
'Twas there we found them, and must leave them
there.

As when two pilgrims in a forest stray,
Both may be lost, yet each in his own way ;
So fares it with the multitudes beguiled
In vain opinion's waste and dangerous wild ;
Ten thousand rove the brakes and thorns among,
Some eastward, and some westward, and all wrong.
But here, alas ! the fatal difference lies,
Each man's belief is right in his own eyes ;
And he that blames, what they have blindly chose,
Incurs resentment for the love he shows.

Say, botanist, within whose province fall
The cedar and the hyssop on the wall,
Of all that deck the lanes, the fields, the bowers,
What parts the kindred tribes of weeds and flowers ?
Sweet scent, or lovely form, or both combined,
Distinguish every cultivated kind ;

The want of both denotes a meaner breed,
And Chloe from her garland picks the weed.
Thus hopes of every sort, whatever sect
Esteem them, sow them, rear them, and protect,
If wild in nature, and not duly found,
Gethsemane ! in thy dear hallow'd ground,
That cannot bear the blaze of Scripture light,
Nor cheer the spirit, nor refresh the sight,
Nor animate the soul to Christian deeds,
(Oh cast them from thee!) are weeds, arrant weeds.

Ethelred's house, the centre of six ways,
Diverging each from each, like equal rays,
Himself as bountiful as April rains,
Lord paramount of the surrounding plains,
Would give relief of bed and board to none,
But guests that sought it in the appointed One ;
And they might enter at his open door,
Even till his spacious hall would hold no more.
He sent a servant forth by every road,
To sound his horn and publish it abroad,
That all might mark—knight, menial, high, and
low,

An ordinance it concern'd them much to know.
If after all some headstrong hardy lout
Would disobey, though sure to be shut out,
Could he with reason murmur at his case,
Himself sole author of his own disgrace ?
No ! the decree was just and without flaw ;
And he that made had right to make the law ;
His sovereign power and pleasure unrestrain'd,
The wrong was his who wrongfully complain'd.

Yet half mankind maintain a churlish strife
With him the Donor of eternal life,
Because the deed, by which his love confirms
The largess he bestows, prescribes the terms.
Compliance with his will your lot ensures,
Accept it only, and the boon is yours.
And sure it is as kind to smile and give,
As with a frown to say, Do this, and live.
Love is not pedler's trumpery, bought and sold ;
He will give freely, or he will withhold ;
His soul abhors a mercenary thought,
And him as deeply who abhors it not ;
He stipulates indeed, but merely this,
That man will freely take an unbought bliss,
Will trust him for a faithful generous part,
Nor set a price upon a willing heart.
Of all the ways that seem to promise fair,
To place you where his saints his presence share,
This only can ; for this plain cause express'd,
In terms as plain, himself has shut the rest.
But oh the strife, the bickering, and debate,
The tidings of unpurchased heaven create !
The flirtd fan, the bridle, and the toss,
All speakers, yet all language at a loss.
From stucco'd walls smart arguments rebound ;
And beaus, adept in every thing profound,
Die of disdain, or whistle off the sound.
Such is the clamour of rooks, daws, and kites,
The explosion of the levell'd tube excites,
Where mouldering abbey walls o'erhang the glade,
And oaks coeval spread a mournful shade,

The screaming nations, hovering in mid air,
Loudly resent the stranger's freedom there,
And seem to warn him never to repeat
His bold intrusion on their dark retreat.

Adieu, Vinosà cries, ere yet he sips
The purple bumper trembling at his lips,
Adieu to all morality ! if grace
Make works a vain ingredient in the case.
The Christian hope is—Waiter, draw the cork—
If I mistake not—Blockhead ! with a fork !
Without good works, whatever some may boast,
Mere folly and delusion—Sir, your toast.
My firm persuasion is, at least sometimes,
That heaven will weigh man's virtues and his crimes
With nice attention in a righteous scale,
And save or damn as these or those prevail.
I plant my foot upon this ground of trust,
And silence every fear with—God is just.
But if perchance on some dull drizzling day
A thought intrude, that says, or seems to say,
If thus the important cause is to be tried,
Suppose the beam should dip on the wrong side;
I soon recover from these needless frights,
And God is merciful—sets all to rights.
Thus between justice, as my prime support,
And mercy fled to as the last resort,
I glide and steal along with heaven in view,
And, pardon me, the bottle stands with you.

I never will believe, the Colonel cries,
The sanguinary schemes that some devise,

Who make the good Creator on their plan
A being of less equity than man.
If appetite, or what divines call lust,
Which men comply with, e'en because they must,
Be punish'd with perdition, who is pure?
Then theirs no doubt, as well as mine, is sure.
If sentence of eternal pain belong
To every sudden slip and transient wrong,
Then heaven enjoins the fallible and frail
A hopeless task, and damns them if they fail.
My creed (whatever some creed-makers mean
By Athanasian nonsense, or Nicene),
My creed is, he is safe that does his best,
And death's a doom sufficient for the rest.

Right, says an ensign; and for aught I see,
Your faith and mine substantially agree;
The best of every man's performance here
Is to discharge the duties of his sphere.
A lawyer's dealings should be just and fair,
Honesty shines with great advantage there.
Fasting and prayer sit well upon a priest,
A decent caution and reserve at least.
A soldier's best is courage in the field,
With nothing here that wants to be conceal'd.
Manly deportment, gallant, easy, gay;
A hand as liberal as the light of day.
The soldier thus endow'd, who never shrinks,
Nor closets up his thoughts, whate'er he thinks,
Who scorns to do an injury by stealth,
Must go to heaven—and I must drink his health.

Sir Smug, he cries (for lowest at the board,
Just made fifth chaplain of his patron lord,
His shoulders witnessing by many a shrug
How much his feelings suffer'd, sat Sir Smug),
Your office is to winnow false from true ;
Come, prophet, drink, and tell us, What think you ?

Sighing and smiling as he takes his glass,
Which they that woo preferment rarely pass,
Fallible man, the churchbred youth replies,
Is still found fallible, however wise ;
And differing judgments serve but to declare,
That truth lies somewhere, if we knew but where.
Of all it ever was my lot to read,
Of critics now alive or long since dead,
The book of all the world that charm'd me most
Was, welladay, the titlepage was lost ;
The writer well remarks a heart, that knows
To take with gratitude what heaven bestows,
With prudence always ready at our call,
To guide our use of it, is all in all.
Doubtless it is. To which, of my own store,
I superadd a few essentials more ;
But these, excuse the liberty I take,
I wave just now, for conversation's sake.
Spoke like an oracle, they all exclaim,
And add Right Reverend to Smug's honour'd name.

And yet our lot is given us in a land
Where busy arts are never at a stand ;
Where science points her telescopic eye,
Familiar with the wonders of the sky ;

Where bold inquiry, diving out of sight,
Brings many a precious pearl of truth to light ;
Where nought eludes the persevering quest,
That fashion, taste, or luxury suggest.

But above all, in her own light array'd,
See Mercy's grand apocalypse display'd !
The sacred book no longer suffers wrong,
Bound in the fetters of an unknown tongue ;
But speaks with plainness art could never mend,
What simplest minds can soonest comprehend.
God gives the word, the preachers throng around,
Live from his lips, and spread the glorious sound :
That sound bespeaks salvation on her way,
The trumpet of a life-restoring day ;
'Tis heard where England's eastern glory shines,
And in the gulfs of her Cornubian mines.
And still it spreads. See Germany send forth
Her sons* to pour it on the farthest north :
Fired with a zeal peculiar, they defy
The rage and rigour of a polar sky,
And plant successfully sweet Sharon's rose,
On icy plains, and in eternal snows.

O blest within the inclosure of your rocks,
Not herds have ye to boast, nor bleating flocks ;
Nor fertilizing streams your fields divide,
That show reversed the villas on their side ;
No groves have ye ; nor cheerful sound of bird,
Or voice of turtle in your land is heard ;

* The Moravian Missionaries in Greenland.—See Krantz.

Nor grateful eglantine regales the smell
Of those that walk at evening where ye dwell ;
But winter, arm'd with terrors here unknown,
Sits absolute on his unshaken throne ;
Piles up his stores amidst the frozen waste,
And bids the mountains he has built stand fast ;
Beckons the legions of his storms away
From happier scenes, to make your land a prey ;
Proclaims the soil a conquest he has won,
And scorns to share it with the distant sun.
—Yet truth is yours, remote, unenvied isle !
And peace the genuine offspring of her smile ;
The pride of letter'd ignorance, that binds
In chains of error our accomplish'd minds,
That decks, with all the splendour of the true,
A false religion, is unknown to you.
Nature indeed vouchsafes for our delight
The sweet vicissitudes of day and night ;
Soft airs and genial moisture feed and cheer
Field, fruit, and flower, and every creature here ;
But brighter beams, than his who fires the skies,
Have risen at length on your admiring eyes,
That shoot into your darkest caves the day,
From which our nicer optics turn away.

Here see the encouragement grace gives to vice,
The dire effect of mercy without price !
What were they ? what some fools are made by art,
They were by nature, atheists, head and heart.
The gross idolatry blind heathens teach
Was too refined for them, beyond their reach.

Not e'en the glorious sun, though men revere
The monarch most, that seldom will appear,
And though his beams, that quicken where they
shine,

May claim some right to be esteem'd divine,
Not e'en the sun, desirable as rare,
Could bend one knee, engage one votary there;
They were, what base credulity believes
True christians are, dissemblers, drunkards, thieves.
The full gorged savage, at his nauseous feast
Spent half the darkness, and snored out the rest,
Was one, when justice, on an equal plan
Denouncing death upon the sins of man,
Might also have indulged with an escape,
Chargeable only with a human shape.

What are they now?—Morality may spare
Her grave concern, her kind suspicions there;
The wretch, who once sang wildly, danced, and
laugh'd,

And suck'd in dizzy madness with his draught,
Has wept a silent flood, reversed his ways,
Is sober, meek, benevolent, and prays,
Feeds sparingly, communicates his store,
Abhors the craft he boasted of before,
And he that stole has learn'd to steal no more.
Well spake the prophet, Let the desert sing,
Where sprang the thorn, the spiry fir shall spring,
And where unsightly and rank thistles grew,
Shall grow the myrtle and luxuriant yew.

Go now, and with important tone demand
On what foundation virtue is to stand.

If self-exalting claims be turn'd adrift,
And grace be grace indeed, and life a gift ;
The poor reclaim'd inhabitant, his eyes
Glistening at once with pity and surprise,
Amazed that shadows should obscure the sight
Of one, whose birth was in a land of light,
Shall answer, Hope, sweet Hope, has set me free,
And made all pleasures else mere dross to me.

These, amidst scenes as waste as if denied
The common care that waits on all beside,
Wild as if nature there, void of all good,
Play'd only gambols in a frantic mood,
(Yet charge not heavenly skill with having plann'd
A plaything world, unworthy of his hand ;)
Can see his love, though secret evil lurks
In all we touch, stamp'd plainly on his works ;
Deem life a blessing with its numerous woes,
Nor spurn away a gift a God bestows.
Hard task indeed o'er arctic seas to roam !
Is hope exotic ? grows it not at home ?
Yes, but an object, bright as orient morn,
May press the eye too closely to be borne ;
A distant virtue we can all confess,
It hurts our pride, and moves our envy less.

Leuconomus (beneath well sounding Greek
I slur a name a poet must not speak)
Stood pilloried on infamy's high stage,
And bore the pelting scorn of half an age ;
The very butt of slander, and the blot
For every dart that malice ever shot.

The man that mention'd him at once dismiss'd
All mercy from his lips, and sneer'd and hiss'd ;
His crimes were such as Sodom never knew,
And perjury stood up to swear all true ;
His aim was mischief, and his zeal pretence,
His speech rebellion against common sense ;
A knave, when tried on honesty's plain rule ;
And when by that of reason, a mere fool ;
The world's best comfort was, his doom was pass'd ;
Die when he might, he must be damn'd at last.

Now, Truth, perform thine office ; waft aside
The curtain drawn by prejudice and pride,
Reveal (the man is dead) to wondering eyes
This more than monster in his proper guise.
He loved the world that hated him : the tear
That dropp'd upon his Bible was sincere ;
Assail'd by scandal and the tongue of strife,
His only answer was a blameless life ;
And he that forged, and he that threw the dart,
Had each a brother's interest in his heart.
Paul's love of Christ, and steadiness unbribed,
Were copied close in him, and well transcribed.
He follow'd Paul ; his zeal a kindred flame,
His apostolic charity the same.
Like him, cross'd cheerfully tempestuous seas,
Forsaking country, kindred, friends, and ease ;
Like him he labour'd, and like him content
To bear it, suffer'd shame where'er he went.
Blush, calumny ! and write upon his tomb,
If honest eulogy can spare thee room,

Thy deep repentance of thy thousand lies, [skies;
Which, aim'd at him, have pierced the offended .
And say, Blot out my sin, confess'd, deplored,
Against thine image, in thy saint, O Lord!

No blinder bigot, I maintain it still,
Than he who must have pleasure, come what will :
He laughs, whatever weapon Truth may draw,
And deems her sharp artillery mere straw.
Scripture indeed is plain ; but God and he
On scripture ground are sure to disagree ;
Some wiser rule must teach him how to live,
Than this his maker has seen fit to give ;
Supple and flexible as Indian cane,
To take the bend his appetites ordain ;
Contrived to suit frail Nature's crazy case,
And reconcile his lusts with saving grace.
By this, with nice precision of design,
He draws upon life's map a zig-zag line,
That shows how far 'tis safe to follow sin,
And where his danger and God's wrath begin.
By this he forms, as pleased he sports along,
His well poised estimate of right and wrong ;
And finds the modish manners of the day,
Though loose, as harmless as an infant's play.

Build by whatever plan caprice decrees,
With what materials, on what ground you please ;
Your hope shall stand unblamed, perhaps admired,
If not that hope the scripture has required.
The strange conceits, vain projects, and wild dreams,
With which hypocrisy for ever teems,

(Though other follies strike the public eye,
And raise a laugh) pass unmolested by ;
But if, unblamable in word and thought,
A MAN arise, a man whom God has taught,
With all Elijah's dignity of tone,
And all the love of the beloved John,
To storm the citadels they build in air,
And smite the untemper'd wall ; 'tis death to spare.
To sweep away all refuges of lies,
And place, instead of quirks themselves devise,
LAMA SABACTHANI before their eyes ;
To prove that without Christ all gain is loss,
All hope despair, that stands not on his cross ;
Except the few his God may have impress'd,
A tenfold frenzy seizes all the rest.

Throughout mankind, the Christian kind at least,
There dwells a consciousness in every breast,
That folly ends where genuine hope begins,
And he that finds his heaven must lose his sins.
Nature opposes with her utmost force
This riving stroke, this ultimate divorce ;
And, while religion seems to be her view,
Hates with a deep sincerity the true :
For this, of all that ever influenced man,
Since Abel worshipp'd, or the world began,
This only spares no lust, admits no plea,
But makes him, if at all, completely free ;
Sounds forth the signal, as she mounts her car,
Of an eternal, universal war ;
Rejects all treaty, penetrates all wiles, [smiles ;
Scorns with the same indifference frowns and

Drives through the realms of sin, where riot reels,
And grinds his crown beneath her burning wheels!
Hence all that is in man, pride, passion, art,
Powers of the mind, and feelings of the heart,
Insensible of truth's almighty charms,
Starts at her first approach, and sounds to arms!
While bigotry, with well dissembled fears,
His eyes shut fast, his fingers in his ears,
Mighty to parry and push by God's word
With senseless noise, his argument the sword,
Pretends a zeal for godliness and grace,
And spits abhorrence in the Christian's face.

Parent of Hope, immortal Truth! make known
Thy deathless wreaths and triumphs all thine own:
The silent progress of thy power is such,
Thy means so feeble, and despised so much,
That few believe the wonders thou hast wrought,
And none can teach them but whom thou hast taught.
Oh see me sworn to serve thee, and command
A painter's skill into a poet's hand,
That, while I trembling trace a work divine,
Fancy may stand aloof from the design,
And light and shade, and every stroke be thine.

If ever thou hast felt another's pain,
If ever when he sigh'd hast sigh'd again,
If ever on thy eyelid stood the tear
That pity had engender'd, drop one here.
This man was happy—had the world's good word,
And with it every joy it can afford;
Friendship and love seem'd tenderly at strife,
Which most should sweeten his untroubled life;

Politely learn'd, and of a gentle race,
Good breeding and good sense gave all a grace,
And whether at the toilette of the fair
He laugh'd and trifled, made him welcome there,
Or if in masculine debate he shared,
Ensured him mute attention and regard.
Alas how changed ! Expressive of his mind,
His eyes are sunk, arms folded, head reclined ;
Those awful syllables, hell, death, and sin,
Though whisper'd, plainly tell what works within ;
That conscience there performs her proper part,
And writes a doomsday sentence on his heart !
Forsaking, and forsaken of all friends,
He now perceives where earthly pleasure ends ;
Hard task ! for one who lately knew no care,
And harder still as learnt beneath despair ;
His hours no longer pass unmark'd away,
A dark importance saddens every day ;
He hears the notice of the clock, perplex'd,
And cries, Perhaps eternity strikes next !
Sweet music is no longer music here,
And laughter sounds like madness in his ear :
His grief the world of all her power disarms ;
Wine has no taste, and beauty has no charms :
God's holy word, once trivial in his view,
Now by the voice of his experience true,
Seems, as it is, the fountain whence alone
Must spring that hope he pants to make his own.

Now let the bright reverse be known abroad ;
Say man's a worm, and power belongs to God.

As when a felon, whom his country's laws
Have justly doom'd for some atrocious cause,
Expects in darkness and heart-chilling fears
The shameful close of all his misspent years ;
If chance, on heavy pinions slowly borne,
A tempest usher in the dreaded morn,
Upon his dungeon walls the lightning play,
The thunder seems to summon him away,
The warder at the door his key applies,
Shoots back the bolt, and all his courage dies :
If then, just then, all thoughts of mercy lost,
When Hope, long lingering, at last yields the ghost,
The sound of pardon pierce his startled ear,
He drops at once his fetters and his fear ;
A transport glows in all he looks and speaks,
And the first thankful tears bedew his cheeks.
Joy, far superior joy, that much outweighs
The comfort of a few poor added days,
Invades, possesses, and o'erwhelms the soul
Of him whom Hope has with a touch made whole.
'Tis heaven, all heaven descending on the wings
Of the glad legions of the King of kings ;
'Tis more—'tis God diffused through every part,
'Tis God himself triumphant in his heart.
O welcome now the sun's once hated light,
His noonday beams were never half so bright.
Not kindred minds alone are call'd to employ
Their hours, their days, in listening to his joy ;
Unconscious nature, all that he surveys, [praise.
Rocks, groves, and streams must join him in his

These are thy glorious works, eternal Truth,
The scoff of wither'd age and beardless youth ;
These move the censure and illiberal grin
Of fools that hate thee and delight in sin :
But these shall last when night has quench'd the
And heaven is all departed as a scroll. [pole,
And when, as justice has long since decreed,
This earth shall blaze, and a new world succeed,
Then these thy glorious works, and they who share
That hope which can alone exclude despair,
Shall live exempt from weakness and decay,
The brightest wonders of an endless day.

Happy the bard (if that fair name belong
To him that blends no fable with his song)
Whose lines uniting, by an honest art,
The faithful monitor's and poet's part,
Seek to delight, that they may mend mankind,
And while they captivate, inform the mind :
Still happier, if he till a thankful soil,
And fruit reward his honourable toil :
But happier far, who comfort those that wait
To hear plain truth at Judah's hallow'd gate :
Their language simple, as their manners meek,
No shining ornaments have they to seek ;
Nor labour they, nor time nor talents waste,
In sorting flowers to suit a fickle taste ;
But while they speak the wisdom of the skies,
Which art can only darken and disguise,
The abundant harvest, recompense divine,
Repays their work—the gleanings only mine.

CHARITY.

Quo nihil majus meliusve terris
 Fata donavère, bonique divi ;
 Nec dabunt, quamvis redeant in aurum
 Tempora priscum.

HOR. LIB. IV, ODE 2.

FAIREST and foremost of the train that wait
 On man's most dignified and happiest state,
 Whether we name thee Charity or Love,
 Chief grace below, and all in all above,
 Prosper (I press thee with a powerful plea)
 A task I venture on, impell'd by thee :
 O never seen but in thy blest effects,
 Or felt but in the soul that heaven selects ;
 Who seeks to praise thee, and to make thee known
 To other hearts, must have thee in his own.
 Come, prompt me with benevolent desires,
 Teach me to kindle at thy gentle fires,
 And, though disgraced and slighted, to redeem
 A poet's name, by making thee the theme.

God, working ever on a social plan,
 By various ties attaches man to man :
 He made at first, though free and unconfined,
 One man the common father of the kind ;
 That every tribe, though placed as he sees best,
 Where seas or deserts part them from the rest,

Differing in language, manners, or in face,
Might feel themselves allied to all the race.
When Cook—lamented, and with tears as just
As ever mingled with heroic dust,
Steer'd Britain's oak into a world unknown,
And in his country's glory sought his own,
Wherever he found man, to nature true,
The rights of man were sacred in his view ;
He soothed with gifts, and greeted with a smile
The simple native of the new found isle ;
He spurn'd the wretch that slighted or withstood
The tender argument of kindred blood ;
Nor would endure, that any should control
His freeborn brethren of the southern pole.

But though some nobler minds a law respect,
That none shall with impunity neglect,
In baser souls unnumber'd evils meet,
To thwart its influence, and its end defeat.
While Cook is loved for savage lives he saved,
See Cortez odious for a world enslaved !
Where wast thou then, sweet Charity ? where then,
Thou tutelary friend of helpless men ?
Wast thou in monkish cells and nunneries found,
Or building hospitals on English ground ?
No.—Mammon makes the world his legatee
Through fear, not love ; and heaven abhors the fee.
Wherever found (and all men need thy care),
Nor age nor infancy could find thee there.
The hand that slew till it could slay no more
Was glued to the sword hilt with Indian gore.

Their prince, as justly seated on his throne
As vain imperial Philip on his own,
Trick'd out of all his royalty by art,
That stripp'd him bare, and broke his honest heart,
Died, by the sentence of a shaven priest,
For scorning what they taught him to detest.
How dark the veil that intercepts the blaze
Of heaven's mysterious purposes and ways;
God stood not, though he seem'd to stand, aloof;
And at this hour the conqueror feels the proof:
The wreath he won drew down an instant curse,
The fretting plague is in the public purse,
The canker'd spoil corrodes the pining state,
Starved by that indolence their mines create.

Oh could their ancient Incas rise again,
How would they take up Israel's taunting strain!
Art thou too fallen, Iberia? Do we see
The robber and the murderer weak as we?
Thou, that hast wasted earth, and dared despise
Alike the wrath and mercy of the skies,
Thy pomp is in the grave, thy glory laid
Low in the pits thine avarice has made.
We come with joy from our eternal rest
To see the oppressor in his turn oppress'd.
Art thou the god, the thunder of whose hand
Roll'd over all our desolated land,
Shook principalities and kingdoms down,
And made the mountains tremble at his frown?
The sword shall light upon thy boasted powers,
And waste them, as thy sword has wasted ours.

'Tis thus Omnipotence his law fulfils,
And vengeance executes what justice wills.

Again—the band of commerce was design'd
To associate all the branches of mankind ;
And if a boundless plenty be the robe,
Trade is the golden girdle of the globe.
Wise to promote whatever end he means,
God opens fruitful nature's various scenes :
Each climate needs what other climes produce,
And offers something to the general use ;
No land but listens to the common call,
And in return receives supply from all.
This genial intercourse, and mutual aid,
Cheers what were else a universal shade,
Calls nature from her ivy-mantled den,
And softens human rock-work into men.
Ingenious art, with her expressive face,
Steps forth to fashion and refine the race ;
Not only fills necessity's demand,
But overcharges her capacious hand :
Capricious taste itself can crave no more
Than she supplies from her abounding store :
She strikes out all that luxury can ask,
And gains new vigour at her endless task.
Hers is the spacious arch, the shapely spire,
The painter's pencil, and the poet's lyre ;
From her the canvass borrows light and shade,
And verse, more lasting, hues that never fade.
She guides the finger o'er the dancing keys,
Gives difficulty all the grace of ease,

And pours a torrent of sweet notes around,
Fast as the thirsting ear can drink the sound.

These are the gifts of art; and art thrives most
Where commerce has enrich'd the busy coast;
He catches all improvements in his flight,
Spreads foreign wonders in his country's sight,
Imports what others have invented well,
And stirs his own to match them or excel.
'Tis thus, reciprocating each with each,
Alternately the nations learn and teach;
While Providence enjoins to every soul
A union with the vast terraqueous whole.

Heaven speed the canvass, gallantly unfurl'd
To furnish and accommodate a world,
To give the pole the produce of the sun,
And knit the unsocial climates into one.
Soft airs and gentle heavings of the wave
Impel the fleet, whose errand is to save,
To succour wasted regions, and replace
The smile of opulence in sorrow's face.
Let nothing adverse, nothing unforeseen
Impede the bark that ploughs the deep serene,
Charged with a freight transcending in its worth
The gems of India, Nature's rarest birth,
That flies, like Gabriel on his Lord's commands,
A herald of God's love to pagan lands.
But ah! what wish can prosper, or what prayer,
For merchants rich in cargoes of despair,
Who drive a loathsome traffic, gauge, and span,
And buy the muscles and the bones of man?

The tender ties of father, husband, friend,
All bonds of nature in that moment end ;
And each endures, while yet he draws his breath,
A stroke as fatal as the scythe of death.
The sable warrior, frantic with regret
Of her he loves, and never can forget,
Loses in tears the far receding shore,
But not the thought that they must meet no more ;
Deprived of her and freedom at a blow,
What has he left that he can yet forego ?
Yes, to deep sadness sullenly resign'd,
He feels his body's bondage in his mind ;
Puts off his generous nature ; and, to suit
His manners with his fate, puts on the brute.

O most degrading of all ills that wait
On man, a mourner in his best estate !
All other sorrows virtue may endure,
And find submission more than half a cure ;
Grief is itself a medicine, and bestow'd
To improve the fortitude that bears the load,
To teach the wanderer, as his woes increase,
The path of wisdom, all whose paths are peace ;
But slavery !—Virtue dreads it as her grave :
Patience itself is meanness in a slave ;
Or if the will and sovereignty of God
Bid suffer it awhile, and kiss the rod,
Wait for the dawning of a brighter day,
And snap the chain the moment when you may.
Nature imprints upon whate'er we see,
That has a heart and life in it, Be free !

The beasts are charter'd—neither age nor force
Can quell the love of freedom in a horse :
He breaks the cord that held him at the rack ;
And, conscious of an unincumber'd back,
Snuffs up the morning air, forgets the rein ;
Loose fly his forelock and his ample mane ;
Responsive to the distant neigh he neighs ;
Nor stops till, overleaping all delays,
He finds the pasture where his fellows graze.

Canst thou, and honour'd with a christian name,
Buy what is woman-born, and feel no shame ?
Trade in the blood of innocence, and plead
Expedience as a warrant for the deed ?
So may the wolf, whom famine has made bold
To quit the forest and invade the fold :
So may the ruffian, who with ghostly glide,
Dagger in hand, steals close to your bedside ;
Not he, but his emergence forced the door,
He found it inconvenient to be poor.
Has God then given its sweetness to the cane,
Unless his laws be trampled on—in vain ?
Built a brave world, which cannot yet subsist,
Unless his right to rule it be dismiss'd ?
Impudent blasphemy ! So folly pleads,
And, avarice being judge, with ease succeeds.

But grant the plea, and let it stand for just,
That man make man his prey, because he must ;
Still there is room for pity to abate
And soothe the sorrows of so sad a state.
A Briton knows, or if he knows it not,
The scripture placed within his reach, he ought,

That souls have no discriminating hue,
Alike important in their Maker's view ;
That none are free from blemish since the fall,
And love divine has paid one price for all.
The wretch that works and weeps without relief
Has one that notices his silent grief.
He, from whose hands alone all power proceeds,
Ranks its abuse among the foulest deeds,
Considers all injustice with a frown ;
But marks the man that treads his fellow down.
Begone—the whip and bell in that hard hand
Are hateful ensigns of usurp'd command.
Not Mexico could purchase kings a claim
To scourge him, weariness his only blame.
Remember, Heaven has an avenging rod,
To smite the poor is treason against God.

Trouble is grudgingly and hardly brook'd,
While life's sublimest joys are overlook'd :
We wander o'er a sunburnt thirsty soil,
Murmuring and weary of our daily toil,
Forget to enjoy the palm-tree's offer'd shade,
Or taste the fountain in the neighbouring glade :
Else who would lose, that had the power to improve,
The occasion of transmitting fear to love ?
O 'tis a godlike privilege to save,
And he that scorns it is himself a slave.
Inform his mind ; one flash of heavenly day
Would heal his heart, and melt his chains away.
“ Beauty for ashes ” is a gift indeed,
And slaves, by truth enlarged, are doubly freed.

Then would he say, submissive at thy feet,
While gratitude and love made service sweet,
My dear deliverer out of hopeless night,
Whose bounty bought me but to give me light,
I was a bondman on my native plain,
Sin forged, and ignorance made fast, the chain;
Thy lips have shed instruction as the dew,
Taught me what path to shun, and what pursue;
Farewell, my former joys! I sigh no more
For Africa's once loved, benighted shore;
Serving a benefactor, I am free;
At my best home, if not exiled from thee.

Some men make gain a fountain, whence proceeds
A stream of liberal and heroic deeds;
The swell of pity, not to be confined
Within the scanty limits of the mind,
Disdains the bank, and throws the golden sands,
A rich deposit, on the bordering lands:
These have an ear for his paternal call,
Who makes some rich for the supply of all;
God's gift with pleasure in his praise employ;
And Thornton is familiar with the joy.

O could I worship ought beneath the skies
That earth has seen, or fancy can devise,
Thine altar, sacred Liberty, should stand,
Built, by no mercenary vulgar hand,
With fragrant turf, and flowers as wild and fair
As ever dress'd a bank, or scented summer air.
Duly, as ever on the mountain's height
The peep of morning shed a dawning light,

Again, when evening in her sober vest
Drew the gray curtain of the fading west,
My soul should yield thee willing thanks and praise
For the chief blessings of my fairest days :
But that were sacrilege—praise is not thine,
But his who gave thee, and preserves thee mine
Else I would say, and as I spake bid fly
A captive bird into the boundless sky,
This triple realm adores thee—thou art come
From Sparta hither, and art here at home.
We feel thy force still active, at this hour
Enjoy immunity from priestly power,
While conscience, happier than in ancient years,
Owns no superior but the God she fears.
Propitious spirit ! yet expunge a wrong
Thy rights have suffer'd, and our land, too long.
Teach mercy to ten thousand hearts, that share
The fears and hopes of a commercial care.
Prisons expect the wicked, and were built
To bind the lawless, and to punish guilt ;
But shipwreck, earthquake, battle, fire, and flood
Are mighty mischiefs, not to be withstood ;
And honest merit stands on slippery ground,
Where covert guile and artifice abound.
Let just restraint, for public peace design'd,
Chain up the wolves and tigers of mankind ;
The foe of virtue has no claim to thee,
But let insolvent innocence go free.

Patron of else the most despised of men,
Accept the tribute of a stranger's pen ;

Verse, like the laurel, its immortal meed,
Should be the guerdon of a noble deed ;
I may alarm thee, but I fear the shame
(Charity chosen as my theme and aim)
I must incur, forgetting Howard's name.
Blest with all wealth can give thee, to resign
Joys doubly sweet to feelings quick as thine,
To quit the bliss thy rural scenes bestow,
To seek a nobler amidst scenes of woe,
To traverse seas, range kingdoms, and bring home,
Not the proud monuments of Greece or Rome,
But knowledge such as only dungeons teach,
And only sympathy like thine could reach ;
That grief, sequester'd from the public stage,
Might smooth her feathers, and enjoy her cage ;
Speaks a divine ambition, and a zeal,
The boldest patriot might be proud to feel.
O that the voice of clamour and debate,
That pleads for peace till it disturbs the state,
Were hush'd in favour of thy generous plea,
The poor thy clients, and Heaven's smile thy fee !

Philosophy, that does not dream or stray,
Walks arm in arm with nature all his way ;
Compasses earth, dives into it, ascends
Whatever steep inquiry recommends,
Sees planetary wonders smoothly roll
Round other systems under her control,
Drinks wisdom at the milky stream of light,
That cheers the silent journey of the night,

And brings at his return a bosom charged
With rich instruction, and a soul enlarged.
The treasured sweets of the capacious plan
That Heaven spreads wide before the view of man,
All prompt his pleased pursuit, and to pursue
Still prompt him, with a pleasure always new ;
He too has a connecting power, and draws
Man to the centre of the common cause,
Aiding a dubious and deficient sight
With a new medium and a purer light.
All truth is precious, if not all divine ;
And what dilates the powers must needs refine.
He reads the skies, and, watching every change,
Provides the faculties an ampler range ;
And wins mankind, as his attempts prevail,
A prouder station on the general scale.
But reason still, unless divinely taught,
Whate'er she learns, learns nothing as she ought ;
The lamp of revelation only shows,
What human wisdom cannot but oppose,
That man, in nature's richest mantle clad,
And graced with all philosophy can add,
Though fair without, and luminous within,
Is still the progeny and heir of sin.
Thus taught, down falls the plumage of his pride ;
He feels his need of an unerring guide,
And knows that falling he shall rise no more,
Unless the power that bade him stand restore.
This is indeed philosophy ; this known
Makes wisdom, worthy of the name, his own ;

And without this, whatever he discuss ;
Whether the space between the stars and us ;
Whether he measure earth, compute the sea,
Weigh sunbeams, carve a fly, or spit a flea ;
The solemn trifler with his boasted skill
Toils much, and is a solemn trifler still :
Blind was he born, and his misguided eyes
Grown dim in trifling studies, blind he dies.
Self-knowledge truly learn'd of course implies
The rich possession of a nobler prize ;
For self to self, and God to man reveal'd
(Two themes to nature's eye for ever seal'd),
Are taught by rays, that fly with equal pace
From the same centre of enlightening grace.
Here stay thy foot ; how copious, and how clear,
The o'erflowing well of Charity springs here !
Hark ! 'tis the music of a thousand rills,
Some through the groves, some down the sloping
Winding a secret or an open course, [hills,
And all supplied from an eternal source.
The ties of nature do but feebly bind ;
And commerce partially reclaims mankind ;
Philosophy, without his heavenly guide,
May blow up self-conceit, and nourish pride ;
But, while his province is the reasoning part,
Has still a veil of midnight on his heart :
'Tis truth divine, exhibited on earth,
Gives Charity her being and her birth.

Suppose (when thought is warm, and fancy flows,
What will not argument sometimes suppose ?)

An isle possess'd by creatures of our kind,
Endued with reason, yet by nature blind.
Let supposition lend her aid once more,
And land some grave optician on the shore :
He claps his lens, if haply they may see,
Close to the part where vision ought to be ;
But finds that, though his tubes assist the sight,
They cannot give it, or make darkness light.
He reads wise lectures, and describes aloud
A sense they know not to the wondering crowd ;
He talks of light and the prismatic hues,
As men of depth in erudition use ;
But all he gains for his harangue is—Well,——
What monstrous lies some travellers will tell !

 The soul, whose sight all-quickenning grace re-
 news,
Takes the resemblance of the good she views,
As diamonds, stripp'd of their opaque disguise,
Reflect the noonday glory of the skies.
She speaks of him, her author, guardian, friend,
Whose love knew no beginning, knows no end,
In language warm as all that love inspires ;
And, in the glow of her intense desires,
Pants to communicate her noble fires.
She sees a world stark blind to what employs
Her eager thought, and feeds her flowing joys ;
Though wisdom hail them, heedless of her call,
Flies to save some, and feels a pang for all :
Herself as weak as her support is strong,
She feels that frailty she denied so long ;

And, from a knowledge of her own disease,
Learns to compassionate the sick she sees.
Here see, acquitted of all vain pretence,
The reign of genuine Charity commence.
Though scorn repay her sympathetic tears,
She still is kind, and still she perseveres ;
The truth she loves a sightless world blaspheme,
'Tis childish dotage, a delirious dream !
The danger they discern not they deny ;
Laugh at their only remedy, and die.
But still a soul thus touch'd can never cease,
Whoever threatens war, to speak of peace.
Pure in her aim, and in her temper mild,
Her wisdom seems the weakness of a child :
She makes excuses where she might condemn,
Reviled by those that hate her, prays for them ;
Suspicion lurks not in her artless breast,
The worst suggested, she believes the best ;
Not soon provoked, however stung and teased,
And, if perhaps made angry, soon appeased ;
She rather waves than will dispute her right ;
And injured, makes forgiveness her delight.

Such was the portrait an apostle drew,
The bright original was one he knew ;
Heaven held his hand, the likeness must be true.

When one, that holds communion with the skies,
Has fill'd his urn where these pure waters rise,
And once more mingles with us meaner things,
'Tis e'en as if an angel shook his wings ;
Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide,
That tells us whence his treasures are supplied.

So when a ship, well freighted with the stores
The sun matures on India's spicy shores,
Has dropp'd her anchor, and her canvass furl'd,
In some safe haven of our western world,
'Twere vain inquiry to what port she went,
The gale informs us, laden with the scent.

Some seek, when queasy conscience has its
qualms,
To lull the painful malady with alms ;
But charity not feign'd intends alone
Another's good—theirs centres in their own ;
And, too short lived to reach the realms of peace,
Must cease for ever when the poor shall cease.
Flavia, most tender of her own good name,
Is rather careless of her sister's fame :
Her superfluity the poor supplies,
But, if she touch a character, it dies.
The seeming virtue weigh'd against the vice,
She deems all safe, for she has paid the price :
No charity but alms aught values she,
Except in porcelain on her mantel-tree.
How many deeds, with which the world has rung.
From pride, in league with ignorance, have sprung !
But God o'errules all human follies still,
And bends the tough materials to his will.
A conflagration, or a wintry flood,
Has left some hundreds without home or food :
Extravagance and avarice shall subscribe,
While fame and self-complacence are the bride.
The brief proclaim'd, it visits every pew,
But first the squire's, a compliment but due :

With slow deliberation he unties
His glittering purse, that envy of all eyes !
And, while the clerk just puzzles out the psalm,
Slides guinea behind guinea in his palm ;
Till finding, what he might have found before,
A smaller piece amidst the precious store,
Pinch'd close between his finger and his thumb,
He half exhibits, and then drops the sum.
Gold, to be sure !—Throughout the town 'tis told
How the good squire gives never less than gold.
From motives such as his, though not the best,
Springs in due time supply for the distress'd ;
Not less effectual than what love bestows,
Except that office clips it as it goes.

But lest I seem to sin against a friend,
And wound the grace I mean to recommend,
(Though vice derided with a just design
Implies no trespass against love divine),
Once more I would adopt the graver style,
A teacher should be sparing of his smile.
Unless a love of virtue light the flame,
Satire is, more than those he brands, to blame ;
He hides behind a magisterial air
His own offences, and strips others bare ;
Affects indeed a most humane concern,
That men, if gently tutor'd, will not learn ;
That mulish folly, not to be reclaim'd
By softer methods, must be made ashamed ;
But (I might instance in St. Patrick's dean)
Too often rails to gratify his spleen.

Most satirists are indeed a public scourge ;
Their mildest physic is a farrier's purge ;
Their acrid temper turns, as soon as stirr'd,
The milk of their good purpose all to curd.
Their zeal begotten, as their works rehearse,
By lean despair upon an empty purse,
The wild assassins start into the street,
Prepared to poniard whomsoe'er they meet.
No skill in swordmanship, however just,
Can be secure against a madman's thrust ;
And even virtue, so unfairly match'd,
Although immortal, may be prick'd or scratch'd.
When scandal has new minted an old lie,
Or tax'd invention for a fresh supply,
'Tis call'd a satire, and the world appears
Gathering around it with erected ears :
A thousand names are toss'd into the crowd ;
Some whisper'd softly, and some twang'd aloud ;
Just as the sapience of an author's brain
Suggests it safe or dangerous to be plain.
Strange ! how the frequent interjected dash
Quickens a market, and helps off the trash ;
The important letters, that include the rest,
Serve as a key to those that are suppress'd ;
Conjecture gripes the victims in his paw,
The world is charm'd, and Scrib escapes the law.
So, when the cold damp shades of night prevail,
Worms may be caught by either head or tail ;
Forcibly drawn from many a close recess,
They meet with little pity, no redress ;

Plunged in the stream, they lodge upon the mud,
Food for the famish'd rovers of the flood.

All zeal for a reform, that gives offence
To peace and charity, is mere pretence :
A bold remark ; but which, if well applied,
Would humble many a towering poet's pride.
Perhaps, the man was in a sportive fit,
And had no other play-place for his wit ;
Perhaps, enchanted with the love of fame,
He sought the jewel in his neighbour's shame ;
Perhaps—whatever end he might pursue,
The cause of virtue could not be his view.
At every stroke wit flashes in our eyes ;
The turns are quick, the polish'd points surprise,
But shine with cruel and tremendous charms,
That, while they please, possess us with alarms ;
So have I seen (and hasten'd to the sight
On all the wings of holiday delight),
Where stands that monument of ancient power,
Named with emphatic dignity, the Tower,
Guns, halberts, swords, and pistols, great and small,
In starry forms disposed upon the wall :
We wonder, as we gazing stand below,
That brass and steel should make so fine a show ;
But though we praise the exact designer's skill,
Account them implements of mischief still.

No works shall find acceptance in that day,
When all disguises shall be rent away,
That square not truly with the scripture plan,
Nor spring from love to God, or love to man.

As he ordains things sordid in their birth
To be resolved into their parent earth ;
And, though the soul shall seek superior orbs,
Whate'er this world produces, it absorbs ;
So self starts nothing, but what tends apace
Home to the goal, where it began the race.
Such as our motive is our aim must be ;
If this be servile, that can ne'er be free :
If self employ us, whatsoe'er is wrought,
We glorify that self, not him we ought ;
Such virtues had need prove their own reward,
The judge of all men owes them no regard.
True Charity, a plant divinely nursed,
Fed by the love from which it rose at first,
Thrives against hope, and, in the rudest scene,
Storms but enliven its unfading green ;
Exuberant is the shadow it supplies,
Its fruit on earth, its growth above the skies.
To look at Him, who form'd us and redeem'd,
So glorious now, though once so disesteem'd ;
To see a God stretch forth his human hand,
To uphold the boundless scenes of his command ;
To recollect that, in a form like ours,
He bruised beneath his feet the infernal powers,
Captivity led captive, rose to claim
The wreath he won so dearly in our name ;
That throned above all height he condescends
To call the few that trust in him his friends ;
That, in the Heaven of heavens, that space he
Too scanty for the exertion of his beams, [deems

And shines, as if impatient to bestow
Life and a kingdom upon worms below ;
That sight imparts a never dying flame,
Though feeble in degree, in kind the same.
Like him the soul, thus kindled from above,
Spreads wide her arms of universal love ;
And, still enlarged as she receives the grace,
Includes creation in her close embrace.
Behold a Christian!—and without the fires
The founder of that name alone inspires,
Though all accomplishment, all knowledge meet,
To make the shining prodigy complete,
Whoever boasts that name—behold a cheat !
Were love, in these the world's last doting years,
As frequent as the want of it appears,
The churches warm'd, they would no longer hold
Such frozen figures, stiff as they are cold ;
Relenting forms would lose their power, or cease ;
And e'en the dipp'd and spinkled live in peace :
Each heart would quit its prison in the breast,
And flow in free communion with the rest.
The statesman, skill'd in projects dark and deep,
Might burn his useless Machiavel, and sleep ;
His budget, often fill'd, yet always poor,
Might swing at ease behind his study door,
No longer prey upon our annual rents,
Or scare the nation with its big contents :
Disbanded legions freely might depart,
And slaying man would cease to be an art.
No learned disputants would take the field,
Sure not to conquer, and sure not to yield ;

Both sides deceived, if rightly understood,
Pelting each other for the public good.
Did Charity prevail, the press would prove
A vehicle of virtue, truth, and love ;
And I might spare myself the pains to show
What few can learn, and all suppose they know.
Thus have I sought to grace a serious lay
With many a wild, indeed, but flowery spray,
In hopes to gain, what else I must have lost,
The attention pleasure has so much engross'd.
But if unhappily deceived I dream,
And prove too weak for so divine a theme,
Let Charity forgive me a mistake,
That zeal, not vanity, has chanced to make,
And spare the poet for his subject's sake.

CONVERSATION.

Nam neque me tantum venientis sibilus austri,
 Nec percussa juvant fluctû tam litora, nec quæ
 Saxosas inter decurrunt flumina valles.

VIRG. ECL. V.

THOUGH nature weigh our talents, and dispense
 To every man his modicum of sense,
 And Conversation in its better part
 May be esteem'd a gift, and not an art,
 Yet much depends, as in the tiller's toil,
 On culture, and the sowing of the soil.
 Words learn'd by rote a parrot may rehearse,
 But talking is not always to converse ;
 Not more distinct from harmony divine,
 The constant creaking of a country sign.
 As alphabets in ivory employ,
 Hour after hour, the yet unletter'd boy,
 Sorting and puzzling with a deal of glee
 Those seeds of science call'd his A B C ;
 So language in the mouths of the adult,
 Witness its insignificant result,
 Too often proves an implement of play,
 A toy to sport with, and pass time away.
 Collect at evening what the day brought forth,
 Compress the sum into its solid worth,

And if it weigh the importance of a fly,
The scales are false, or algebra a lie.
Sacred interpreter of human thought,
How few respect or use thee as they ought !
But all shall give account of every wrong,
Who dare dishonour or defile the tongue ;
Who prostitute it in the cause of vice,
Or sell their glory at a market price ;
Who vote for hire, or point it with lampoon,
The dear bought placeman, and the cheap buffoon.

There is a prurience in the speech of some,
Wrath stays him, or else God would strike them
dumb :

His wise forbearance has their end in view,
They fill their measure, and receive their due.
The heathen lawgivers of ancient days,
Names almost worthy of a Christian's praise,
Would drive them forth from the resort of men,
And shut up every satyr in his den.
O come not ye near innocence and truth,
Ye worms that eat into the bud of youth !
Infectious as impure, your blighting power
Taints in its rudiments the promised flower ;
Its odour perish'd and its charming hue,
Thenceforth 'tis hateful, for it smells of you.
Not e'en the vigorous and headlong rage
Of adolescence, or a firmer age,
Affords a plea allowable or just
For making speech the pamperer of lust ;
But when the breath of age commits the fault,
'Tis nauseous as the vapour of a vault.

So wither'd stumps disgrace the sylvan scene,
No longer fruitful, and no longer green ;
The sapless wood, divested of the bark,
Grows fungous, and takes fire at every spark.

Oaths terminate, as Paul observes, all strife—
Some men have surely then a peaceful life !
Whatever subject occupy discourse,
The feats of Vestris, or the naval force,
Asseveration blustering in your face
Makes contradiction such a hopeless case :
In every tale they tell, or false or true,
Well known, or such as no man ever knew,
They fix attention, heedless of your pain,
With oaths like rivets forced into the brain ;
And e'en when sober truth prevails throughout,
They swear it, till affirmance breeds a doubt.
A Persian, humble servant of the sun,
Who though devout, yet bigotry had none,
Hearing a lawyer, grave in his address,
With adjurations every word impress,
Supposed the man a bishop, or at least,
God's name so much upon his lips, a priest ;
Bow'd at the close with all his graceful airs,
And begg'd an interest in his frequent prayers.

Go, quit the rank to which ye stood preferr'd,
Henceforth associate in one common herd ;
Religion, virtue, reason, common sense,
Pronounce your human form a false pretence ;
A mere disguise, in which a devil lurks,
Who yet betrays his secret by his works.

Ye powers who rule the tongue, if such there are,
And make colloquial happiness your care,
Preserve me from the thing I dread and hate,
A duel in the form of a debate.
The clash of arguments and jar of words,
Worse than the mortal brunt of rival swords,
Decide no question with their tedious length,
For opposition gives opinion strength,
Divert the champions prodigal of breath,
And put the peaceably disposed to death.
O thwart me not, Sir Soph, at every turn,
Nor carp at every flaw you may discern ;
Though syllogisms hang not on my tongue,
I am not surely always in the wrong ; .
'Tis hard if all is false that I advance,
A fool must now and then be right by chance.
Not that all freedom of dissent I blame ;
No—there I grant the privilege I claim.
A disputable point is no man's ground ;
Rove where you please, 'tis common all around.
Discourse may want an animated—No,
To brush the surface, and to make it flow ;
But still remember, if you mean to please,
To press your point with modesty and ease.
The mark, at which my juster aim I take,
Is contradiction for its own dear sake.
Set your opinion at whatever pitch,
Knots and impediments make something hitch ;
Adopt his own, 'tis equally in vain,
Your thread of argument is snapp'd again ;

The wrangler, rather than accord with you,
Will judge himself deceived, and prove it too.
Vociferated logic kills me quite,
A noisy man is always in the right,
I twirl my thumbs, fall back into my chair,
Fix on the wainscot a distressful stare,
And, when I hope his blunders are all out,
Reply discreetly—To be sure—no doubt !

Dubius is such a scrupulous good man—
Yes—you may catch him tripping, if you can.
He would not, with a peremptory tone,
Assert the nose upon his face his own ;
With hesitation admirably slow,
He humbly hopes—presumes—it may be so.
His evidence, if he were call'd by law
To swear to some enormity he saw,
For want of prominence and just relief,
Would hang an honest man, and save a thief.
Through constant dread of giving truth offence,
He ties up all his hearers in suspense ;
Knows what he knows, as if he knew it not ;
What he remembers seems to have forgot ;
His sole opinion, whatsoe'er befall,
Centring at last in having none at all.
Yet, though he tease and balk your listening ear,
He makes one useful point exceeding clear ;
Howe'er ingenious on his darling theme
A sceptic in philosophy may seem,
Reduced to practice, his beloved rule
Would only prove him a consummate fool ;

Useless in him alike both brain and speech,
Fate having placed all truth above his reach,
His ambiguities his total sum,
He might as well be blind, and deaf, and dumb.

Where men of judgment creep and feel their way,
The positive pronounce without dismay ;
Their want of light and intellect supplied
By sparks absurdity strikes out of pride.
Without the means of knowing right from wrong,
They always are decisive, clear, and strong.
Where others toil with philosophic force,
Their nimble nonsense takes a shorter course ;
Flings at your head conviction in the lump,
And gains remote conclusions at a jump :
Their own defect, invisible to them,
Seen in another, they at once condemn ;
And, though self-idolised in every case,
Hate their own likeness in a brother's face.
The cause is plain, and not to be denied,
The proud are always most provoked by pride.
Few competitions but engender spite ;
And those the most, where neither has a right.

The point of honour has been deem'd of use,
To teach good manners, and to curb abuse :
Admit it true, the consequence is clear,
Our polish'd manners are a mask we wear,
And at the bottom barbarous still and rude ;
We are restrain'd indeed, but not subdued.
The very remedy, however sure,
Springs from the mischief it intends to cure,

And savage in its principle appears,
Tried, as it should be, by the fruit it bears.
'Tis hard, indeed, if nothing will defend
Mankind from quarrels but their fatal end ;
That now and then a hero must de cease,
That the surviving world may live in peace.
Perhaps at last close scrutiny may show
The practice dastardly, and mean, and low ;
That men engage in it compell'd by force ;
And fear, not courage, is its proper source.
The fear of tyrant custom, and the fear
Lest fops should censure us, and fools should sneer.
At least to trample on our Maker's laws,
And hazard life for any or no cause,
To rush into a fix'd eternal state
Out of the very flames of rage and hate,
Or send another shivering to the bar
With all the guilt of such unnatural war,
Whatever use may urge, or honour plead,
On reason's verdict is a madman's deed.
Am I to set my life upon a throw,
Because a bear is rude and surly ? No—
A moral, sensible, and well bred man
Will not affront me, and no other can.
Were I empower'd to regulate the lists,
They should encounter with well loaded fists :
A Trojan combat would be something new,
Let Dares beat Entellus black and blue ;
Then each might show, to his admiring friends,
In honourable bumps his rich amends,

And carry, in contusions of his skull,
A satisfactory receipt in full.

A story, in which native humour reigns,
Is often useful, always entertains :
A graver fact, enlisted on your side,
May furnish illustration, well applied ;
But sedentary weavers of long tales
Give me the fidgets, and my patience fails.
'Tis the most asinine employ on earth,
To hear them tell of parentage and birth,
And echo conversations, dull and dry,
Embellish'd with—He said, and So said I.
At every interview their route the same,
The repetition makes attention lame :
We bustle up with unsuccessful speed,
And in the saddest part cry—Droll indeed !
The path of narrative with care pursue,
Still making probability your clew ;
On all the vestiges of truth attend,
And let them guide you to a decent end.
Of all ambitious man may entertain,
The worst that can invade a sickly brain,
Is that which angles hourly for surprise,
And baits its hook with prodigies and lies.
Credulous infancy, or age as weak,
Are fittest auditors for such to seek,
Who to please others will themselves disgrace,
Yet please not, but affront you to your face.
A great retailer of this curious ware,
Having unloaded and made many stare,

Can this be true?—an arch observer cries ;
Yes (rather moved), I saw it with these eyes !
Sir ! I believe it on that ground alone ;
I could not, had I seen it with my own.

A tale should be judicious, clear, succinct ;
The language plain, and incidents well link'd ;
Tell not as new what every body knows,
And, new or old, still hasten to a close ;
There, centring in a focus round and neat,
Let all your rays of information meet.
What neither yields us profit nor delight
Is like a nurse's lullaby at night ;
Guy Earl of Warwick and fair Eleanore,
Or giant-killing Jack, would please me more.

The pipe, with solemn interposing puff,
Makes half a sentence at a time enough ;
The dozing sages drop the drowsy strain,
Then pause and puff—and speak, and pause again.
Such often, like the tube they so admire,
Important triflers ! have more smoke than fire.
Pernicious weed ! whose scent the fair annoys,
Unfriendly to society's chief joys,
Thy worst effect is banishing for hours
The sex whose presence civilizes ours ;
Thou art indeed the drug a gardener wants,
To poison vermin that infest his plants ;
But are we so to wit and beauty blind,
As to despise the glory of our kind,
And show the softest minds and fairest forms
As little mercy as he grubs and worms ?

They dare not wait the riotous abuse
Thy thirst-creating steams at length produce,
When wine has given indecent language birth,
And forced the floodgates of licentious mirth;
For seaborne Venus her attachment shows
Still to that element from which she rose,
And with a quiet, which no fumes disturb,
Sips meek infusions of a milder herb.

The emphatic speaker dearly loves to oppose,
In contact inconvenient, nose to nose,
As if the gnomon on his neighbour's phiz,
Touch'd with the magnet, had attracted his.
His whisper'd theme, dilated and at large,
Proves after all a windgun's airy charge,
An extract of his diary—no more,
A tasteless journal of the day before.
He walk'd abroad, o'ertaken in the rain,
Call'd on a friend, drank tea, stepp'd home again,
Resumed his purpose, had a world of talk
With one he stumbled on, and lost his walk.
I interrupt him with a sudden bow,
Adieu, dear Sir! lest you should lose it now.

I cannot talk with civet in the room,
A fine puss gentlemen that's all perfume;
The sight's enough—no need to smell a beau—
Who thrusts his nose into a rareeshow?
His odoriferous attempts to please
Perhaps might prosper with a swarm of bees;
But we that make no honey, though we sting,
Poets, are sometimes apt to maul the thing.

'Tis wrong to bring into a mix'd resort,
What makes some sick, and others à-la-mort,
An argument of cogence, we may say,
Why such a one should keep himself away.

A graver coxcomb we may sometimes see,
Quite as absurd, though not so light as he :
A shallow brain behind a serious mask,
An oracle within an empty cask,
The solemn fop ; significant and budge ;
A fool with judges, amongst fools a judge.
He says but little, and that little said
Owes all its weight, like loaded dice, to lead.
His wit invites you by his looks to come,
But when you knock it never is at home :
'Tis like a parcel sent you by the stage,
Some handsome present, as your hopes presage ;
'Tis heavy, bulky, and bids fair to prove
An absent friend's fidelity and love,
But when unpack'd your disappointment groans
To find it stuff'd with brickbats, earth, and stones.

Some men employ their health, an ugly trick,
In making known how oft they have been sick,
And give us, in recitals of disease,
A doctor's trouble, but without the fees ;
Relate how many weeks they kept their bed,
How an emetic or cathartic sped ;
Nothing is slightly touch'd, much less forgot,
Nose, ears, and eyes seem present on the spot.
Now the distemper, spite of draught or pill,
Victorious seem'd, and now the doctor's skill ;

And now—alas, for unforeseen mishaps !
They put on a damp nightcap, and relapse ;
They thought they must have died, they were so bad ;
Their peevish hearers almost wish they had.

Some fretful tempers wince at every touch,
You always do too little or too much :
You speak with life, in hopes to entertain,
Your elevated voice goes through the brain ;
You fall at once into a lower key,
That's worse—the drone-pipe of an humblebee.
The southern sash admits too strong a light,
You rise and drop the curtain—now 'tis night.
He shakes with cold—you stir the fire and strive
To make a blaze—that's roasting him alive.
Serve him with venison, and he chooses fish ;
With sole—that's just the sort he would not wish.
He takes what he at first profess'd to loathe,
And in due time feeds heartily on both ;
Yet still, o'erclouded with a constant frown,
He does not swallow, but he gulps it down.
Your hope to please him vain on every plan,
Himself should work that wonder if he can—
Alas ! his efforts double his distress,
He likes yours little, and his own still less.
Thus always teasing others, always teased,
His only pleasure is to be displeased.

I pity bashful men, who feel the pain
Of fancied scorn and undeserved disdain,
And bear the marks upon a blushing face
Of needless shame, and self-imposed disgrace.

Our sensibilities are so acute,
The fear of being silent makes us mute.
We sometimes think we could a speech produce
Much to the purpose, if our tongues were loose ;
But being tried, it dies upon the lip,
Faint as a chicken's note that has the pip :
Our wasted oil unprofitably burns,
Like hidden lamps in old sepulchral urns.
Few Frenchmen of this evil have complain'd ;
It seems as if we Britons were ordain'd,
By way of wholesome curb upon our pride,
To fear each other, fearing none beside.
The cause perhaps inquiry may descry,
Self searching with an introverted eye,
Conceal'd within an unsuspected part,
The vainest corner of our own vain heart :
For ever aiming at the world's esteem,
Our self-importance ruins its own scheme ;
In other eyes our talents rarely shown,
Become at length so splendid in our own,
We dare not risk them into public view,
Lest they miscarry of what seems their due.
True modesty is a discerning grace,
And only blushes in the proper place ;
But counterfeit is blind, and skulks through fear,
Where 'tis a shame to be ashamed to appear :
Humility the parent of the first,
The last by vanity produced and nursed.
The circle form'd, we sit in silent state,
Like figures drawn upon a dial plate ;

Yes, ma'am, and No, ma'am, utter'd softly, show
Every five minutes how the minutes go ;
Each individual, suffering a constraint,
Poetry may, but colours cannot paint ;
And if in close committee on the sky,
Reports it hot or cold, or wet or dry ;
And finds a changing clime a happy source
Of wise reflection and well timed discourse.
We next inquire, but softly and by stealth,
Like conservators of the public health,
Of epidemic throats, if such there are, [tarrh.
And coughs, and rheums, and phthisic, and ca-
That theme exhausted, a wide chasm ensues,
Fill'd up at last with interesting news,
Who danced with whom, and who are like to wed,
And who is hang'd, and who is brought to bed :
But fear to call a more important cause,
As if 'twere treason against English laws.
The visit paid, with ecstasy we come,
As from a seven years' transportation, home,
And there resume an unembarrass'd brow,
Recovering what we lost we know not how,
The faculties, that seem'd reduced to nought,
Expression and the privilege of thought.

The reeking, roaring hero of the chase,
I give him over as a desperate case.
Physicians write in hopes to work a cure,
Never, if honest ones, when death is sure ;
And though the fox he follows may be tamed,
A mere fox follower never is reclaim'd.

Some farrier should prescribe his proper course,
Whose only fit companion is his horse,
Or if, deserving of a better doom,
The noble beast judge otherwise, his groom.
Yet e'en the rogue that serves him, tho' he stand
To take his honour's orders, cap in hand,
Prefers his fellow grooms with much good sense,
Their skill a truth, his master's a pretence.
If neither horse nor groom affect the squire,
Where can at last his jockeyship retire ?
O, to the club, the scene of savage joys,
The school of coarse good fellowship and noise ;
There, in the sweet society of those
Whose friendship from his boyish years he chose,
Let him improve his talent if he can,
Till none but beasts acknowledge him a man.

Man's heart had been impenetrably seal'd,
Like theirs that cleave the flood or graze the field,
Had not his Maker's all-bestowing hand
Given him a soul, and bade him understand ;
The reasoning power vouchsafed of course inferr'd
The power to clothe that reason with his word ;
For all is perfect that God works on earth,
And he that gives conception aids the birth.
If this be plain, 'tis plainly understood,
What uses of this boon the giver would.
The mind, despatch'd upon her busy toil,
Should range where Providence has bless'd the soil ;
Visiting every flower with labour meet,
And gathering all her treasures sweet by sweet,

She should imbue the tongue with what she sips,
And shed the balmy blessing on the lips,
That good diffused may more abundant grow,
And speech may praise the power that bids it flow.
Will the sweet warbler of the livelong night,
That fills the listening lover with delight,
Forget his harmony, with rapture heard,
To learn the twittering of a meaner bird ?
Or make the parrot's mimicry his choice,
That odious libel on a human voice ?
No—nature, unsophisticate by man,
Starts not aside from her Creator's plan ;
The melody, that was at first design'd
To cheer the rude forefathers of mankind,
Is note for note deliver'd in our ears,
In the last scene of her six thousand years.
Yet fashion, leader of a chattering train,
Whom man, for his own hurt permits to reign,
Who shifts and changes all things but his shape,
And would degrade her votary to an ape,
The fruitful parent of abuse and wrong,
Holds a usurp'd dominion o'er his tongue ;
There sits and prompts him with his own disgrace,
Prescribes the theme, the tone, and the grimace,
And, when accomplish'd in her wayward school,
Calls gentleman whom she has made a fool.
'Tis an unalterable fix'd decree,
That none could frame or ratify but she,
That heaven and hell, and righteousness and sin,
Snares in his path, and foes that lurk within,

God and his attributes (a field of day
Where 'tis an angel's happiness to stray),
Fruits of his love and wonders of his might,
Be never named in ears esteem'd polite.
That he who dares, when she forbids, be grave,
Shall stand proscribed, a madman or a knave,
A close designer not to be believed,
Or, if excused that charge, at least deceived.
Oh, folly worthy of the nurse's lap,
Give it the breast, or stop its mouth with pap !
Is it incredible, or can it seem
A dream to any except those that dream,
That man should love his Maker, and that fire,
Warming his heart, should at his lips transpire ?
Know then, and modestly let fall your eyes,
And veil your daring crest that braves the skies ;
That air of insolence affronts your God,
You need his pardon, and provoke his rod :
Now, in a posture that becomes you more
Than that heroic strut assumed before,
Know, your arrears with every hour accrue
For mercy shown, while wrath is justly due.
The time is short, and there are souls on earth,
Though future pain may serve for present mirth,
Acquainted with the woes that fear or shame,
By fashion taught, forbade them once to name,
And, having felt the pangs you deem a jest,
Have proved them truths too big to be express'd.
Go seek on revelation's hallow'd ground,
Sure to succeed, the remedy they found ;

Touch'd by that power that you have dared to
mock,
That makes seas stable, and dissolves the rock,
Your heart shall yield a life-renewing stream,
That fools, as you have done, shall call a dream.

It happen'd on a solemn eventide,
Soon after He that was our surety died,
Two bosom friends, each pensively inclined,
The scene of all those sorrows left behind,
Sought their own village, busied as they went
In musings worthy of the great event :
They spake of him they loved, of him whose life,
Though blameless, had incurr'd perpetual strife,
Whose deeds had left, in spite of hostile arts,
A deep memorial graven on their hearts.
The recollection, like a vein of ore,
The farther traced, enrich'd them still the more ;
They thought him, and they justly thought him, one
Sent to do more than he appear'd to have done ;
To exalt a people, and to place them high
Above all else, and wonder'd he should die.
Ere yet they brought their journey to an end,
A stranger join'd them, courteous as a friend,
And ask'd them with a kind engaging air,
What their affliction was, and begg'd a share.
Inform'd, he gather'd up the broken thread,
And, truth and wisdom gracing all he said,
Explain'd, illustrated, and search'd so well
The tender theme on which they chose to dwell,
That reaching home, the night, they said, is near,
We must not now be parted, sojourn here—

The new acquaintance soon became a guest,
And made so welcome at their simple feast,
He bless'd the bread, but vanish'd at the word,
And left them both exclaiming, 'Twas the Lord!
Did not our hearts feel all he deign'd to say,
Did they not burn within us by the way?

Now theirs was converse such as it behoves
Man to maintain, and such as God approves :
Their views indeed were indistinct and dim,
But yet successful, being aim'd at him.
Christ and his character their only scope,
Their object, and their subject, and their hope,
They felt what it became them much to feel,
And, wanting him to loose the sacred seal,
Found him as prompt, as their desire was true,
To spread the newborn glories in their view.
Well—what are ages and the lapse of time
Match'd against truths, as lasting as sublime?
Can length of years on God himself exact?
Or make that fiction which was once a fact?
No—marble and recording brass decay,
And, like the graver's memory, pass away ;
The works of man inherit, as is just,
Their author's frailty, and return to dust :
But truth divine for ever stands secure,
Its head is guarded as its base is sure ;
Fix'd in the rolling flood of endless years,
The pillar of the eternal plan appears,
The raving storm and dashing wave defies,
Built by that architect who built the skies.

Hearts may be found, that harbour at this hour
That love of Christ, and all its quickening power;
And lips unstain'd by folly or by strife,
Whose wisdom, drawn from the deep well of life,
Tastes of its healthful origin, and flows
A Jordan for the ablution of our woes.
O days of heaven, and nights of equal praise,
Serene and peaceful as those heavenly days,
When souls drawn upwards in communion sweet
Enjoy the stillness of some close retreat,
Discourse, as if released and safe at home,
Of dangers past, and wonders yet to come,
And spread the sacred treasures of the breast
Upon the lap of covenanted rest.

What, always dreaming over heavenly things,
Like angel-heads in stone with pigeon wings?
Canting and whining out all day the word,
And half the night? fanatic and absurd!
Mine be the friend less frequent in his prayers,
Who makes no bustle with his soul's affairs,
Whose wit can brighten up a wintry day,
And chase the splenetic dull hours away;
Content on earth in earthly things to shine,
Who waits for heaven ere he becomes divine,
Leaves saints to enjoy those altitudes they teach,
And plucks the fruit placed more within his reach.

Well spoken, advocate of sin and shame,
Known by thy bleating, Ignorance thy name.
Is sparkling wit the world's exclusive right?
The fix'd fee-simple of the vain and light?

Can hopes of heaven, bright prospects of an hour,
That come to waft us out of sorrow's power,
Obscure or quench a faculty that finds
Its happiest soil in the serenest minds ?
Religion curbs indeed its wanton play,
And brings the trifler under rigorous sway,
But gives it usefulness unknown before,
And purifying, makes it shine the more.
A christian's wit is inoffensive light,
A beam that aids, but never grieves the sight ;
Vigorous in age as in the flush of youth,
'Tis always active on the side of truth ;
Temperance and peace insure its healthful state,
And make it brightest at its latest date.
Oh I have seen (nor hope perhaps in vain,
-Ere life go down, to see such sights again)
A veteran warrior in the christian field,
Who never saw the sword he could not wield ;
Grave without dulness, learned without pride,
Exact, yet not precise, though meek, keen eyed ;
A man that would have foil'd at their own play
A dozen would-bes of the modern day ;
Who, when occasion justified its use,
Had wit as bright as ready to produce,
Could fetch from records of an earlier age,
Or from philosophy's enlighten'd page,
His rich materials, and regale your ear
With strains it was a privilege to hear :
Yet above all his luxury supreme,
And his chief glory was the gospel theme ;

There he was copious as old Greece or Rome,
His happy eloquence seem'd there at home,
Ambitious not to shine or to excel,
But to treat justly what he loved so well.

It moves me more perhaps than folly ought,
When some green heads, as void of wit as thought,
Suppose themselves monopolists of sense,
And wiser men's ability pretence.
Though time will wear us, and we must grow old,
Such men are not forgot as soon as cold,
Their fragrant memory will outlast their tomb,
Embalm'd for ever in its own perfume.
And to say truth, though in its early prime,
And when unstain'd with any grosser crime,
Youth has a sprightliness and fire to boast,
That in the valley of decline are lost,
And virtue with peculiar charms appears,
Crown'd with the garland of life's blooming years ;
Yet age, by long experience well inform'd,
Well read, well temper'd, with religion warm'd,
That fire abated which impels rash youth,
Proud of his speed, to overshoot the truth,
As time improves the grape's authentic juice,
Mellows and makes the speech more fit for use,
And claims a reverence in its shortening day,
That 'tis an honour and a joy to pay.
The fruits of age, less fair, are yet more sound,
Than those a brighter season pours around ;
And like the stores autumnal suns mature,
Through wintry rigours unimpair'd endure.

CONVERSATION.

What is fanatic frenzy, scorn'd so much,
And dreaded more than a contagious touch ?
I grant it dangerous, and approve your fear,
That fire is catching if you draw too near ;
But sage observers oft mistake the flame,
And give true piety that odious name.
To tremble (as the creature of an hour
Ought at the view of an almighty power)
Before his presence, at whose awful throne
All tremble in all worlds, except our own,
To supplicate his mercy, love his ways,
And prize them above pleasure, wealth, or praise
Though common sense, allow'd a casting voice
And free from bias, must approve the choice,
Convicts a man fanatic in the extreme,
And wild as madness in the world's esteem.
But that disease, when soberly defined,
Is the false fire of an o'erheated mind ;
It views the truth with a distorted eye,
And either warps or lays it useless by ;
'Tis narrow, selfish, arrogant, and draws
Its sordid nourishment from man's applause ;
And while at heart sin unrelinquish'd lies,
Presumes itself chief favourite of the skies.
'Tis such a light as putrefaction breeds
In fly-blown flesh, whereon the maggot feeds.
Shines in the dark, but usher'd into day,
The stench remains, the lustre dies away.

True bliss, if man may reach it, is compose
Of hearts in union mutually disclosed ;

And, farewell else all hope of pure delight,
Those hearts should be reclaim'd, renew'd, upright.
Bad men, profaning friendship's hallow'd name,
Form, in its stead, a covenant of shame,
A dark confederacy against the laws
Of virtue, and religion's glorious cause :
They build each other up with dreadful skill,
As bastions set point blank against God's will ;
Enlarge and fortify the dread redoubt,
Deeply resolved to shut a Saviour out ;
Call legions up from hell to back the deed ;
And, cursed with conquest, finally succeed.
But souls, that carry on a blest exchange
Of joys they meet with in their heavenly range,
And with a fearless confidence make known
The sorrows sympathy esteems its own,
Daily derive increasing light and force
From such communion in their pleasant course,
Feel less the journey's roughness and its length,
Meet their opposers with united strength,
And one in heart, in interest, and design,
Gird up each other to the race divine.
But Conversation, choose what theme we may,
And chiefly when religion leads the way,
Should flow, like waters after summer showers,
Not as if raised by mere mechanic powers.
The christian, in whose soul, though now distress'd,
Lives the dear thought of joys he once possess'd,
When all his glowing language issued forth
With God's deep stamp upon its current worth,

Will speak without disguise, and must impart,
Sad as it is, his undissembling heart,
Abhors constraint, and dares not feign a zeal,
Or seem to boast a fire he does not feel.
The song of Sion is a tasteless thing,
Unless, when rising on a joyful wing,
The soul can mix with the celestial bands,
And give the strain the compass it demands.

Strange tidings these to tell a world, who treat
All but their own experience as deceit!
Will they believe, though credulous enough,
To swallow much upon much weaker proof,
That there are blest inhabitants of earth,
Partakers of a new ethereal birth,
Their hopes, desires, and purposes estranged
From things terrestrial, and divinely changed,
Their very language of a kind that speaks
The soul's sure interest in the good she seeks,
Who deal with scripture, its importance felt,
As Tully with philosophy once dealt,
And in the silent watches of the night,
And through the scenes of toil-renewing light,
The social walk, or solitary ride,
Keep still the dear companion at their side?
No—shame upon a self-disgracing age,
God's work may serve an ape upon a stage
With such a jest, as fill'd with hellish glee
Certain invisibles as shrewd as he;
But veneration or respect finds none,
Save from the subjects of that work alone.

The world grown old her deep discernment shows,
Claps spectacles on her sagacious nose,
Peruses closely the true christian's face,
And finds it a mere mask of sly grimace ;
Usurps God's office, lays his bosom bare,
And finds hypocrisy close lurking there ;
And, serving God herself through mere constraint,
Concludes his unfeign'd love of him a feint.
And yet, God knows, look human nature through,
(And in due time the world shall know it too)
That since the flowers of Eden felt the blast,
That after man's defection laid all waste,
Sincerity towards the heart-searching God
Has made the new-born creature her abode,
Nor shall be found in unregenerate souls,
Till the last fire burn all between the poles.
Sincerity ! why 'tis his only pride,
Weak and imperfect in all grace beside,
He knows that God demands his heart entire,
And gives him all his just demands require.
Without it his pretensions were as vain,
As having it he deems the world's disdain ;
That great defect would cost him not alone
Man's favourable judgment, but his own ;
His birthright shaken, and no longer clear,
Than while his conduct proves his heart sincere
Retort the charge, and let the world be told
She boasts a confidence she does not hold ;
That, conscious of her crimes, she feels instead
A cold misgiving, and a killing dread :

That while in health the ground of her support
Is madly to forget that life is short ;
That sick she trembles, knowing she must die,
Her hope presumption, and her faith a lie ;
That while she dotes, and dreams that she believes,
She mocks her Maker, and herself deceives,
Her utmost reach, historical assent,
The doctrines warp'd to what they never meant ;
That truth itself is in her head as dull
And useless as a candle in a skull,
And all her love of God a groundless claim,
A trick upon the canvass, painted flame.
Tell her again, the sneer upon her face,
And all her censures of the work of grace,
Are insincere, meant only to conceal
A dread she would not, yet is forced to feel ;
That in her heart the christian she reveres,
And while she seems to scorn him, only fears.

A poet does not work by square or line,
As smiths and joiners perfect a design ;
At least we moderns, our attention less,
Beyond the example of our sires digress,
And claim a right to scamper and run wide,
Wherever chance, caprice, or fancy guide.
The world and I fortuitously met ;
I owed a trifle, and have paid the debt ;
She did me wrong, I recompensed the deed,
And having struck the balance, now proceed.
Perhaps however, as some years have pass'd
Since she and I conversed together last,

And I have lived recluse in rural shades,
Which seldom a distinct report pervades,
Great changes and new manners have occur'd,
And blest reforms, that I have never heard,
And she may now be as discreet and wise,
As once absurd in all discerning eyes.
Sobriety perhaps may now be found
Where once intoxication press'd the ground ;
The subtle and injurious may be just,
And he grown chaste that was the slave of lust ;
Arts once esteem'd may be with shame dismiss'd ;
Charity may relax the miser's fist ;
The gamester may have cast his cards away,
Forgot to curse, and only kneel to pray.
It has indeed been told me (with what weight,
How credibly, 'tis hard for me to state)
That fables old, that seem'd for ever mute,
Revived, are hastening into fresh repute,
And gods and goddesses discarded long
Like useless lumber, or a stroller's song,
Are bringing into vogue their heathen train,
And Jupiter bids fair to rule again ;
That certain feasts are instituted now,
Where Venus hears the lover's tender vow ;
That all Olympus through the country roves,
To consecrate our few remaining groves,
And Echo learns politely to repeat
The praise of names for ages obsolete ;
That having proved the weakness, it should seem
Of revelation's ineffectual beam,

To bring the passions under sober sway,
And give the moral springs their proper play,
They mean to try what may at last be done,
By stout substantial gods of wood and stone,
And whether Roman rites may not produce
The virtues of old Rome for English use.
May such success attend the pious plan,
May Mercury once more embellish man,
Grace him again with long forgotten arts,
Reclaim his taste, and brighten up his parts,
Make him athletic as in days of old,
Learn'd at the bar, in the palæstra bold,
Divest the rougher sex of female airs,
And teach the softer not to copy theirs :
The change shall please, nor shall it matter aught
Who works the wonder, if it be but wrought.
'Tis time, however, if the case stands thus,
For us plain folks, and all who side with us,
To build our altar, confident and bold,
And say as stern Elijah said of old,
The strife now stands upon a fair award,
If Israel's Lord be God, then serve the Lord :
If he be silent, faith is all a whim,
Then Baal is the God, and worship him.

Digression is so much in modern use,
Thought is so rare, and fancy so profuse,
Some never seem so wide of their intent,
As when returning to the theme they meant ;
As mendicants, whose business is to roam,
Make every parish but their own their home.

Though such continual zigzags in a book,
Such drunken reelings have an awkward look,
And I had rather creep to what is true,
Than rove and stagger with no mark in view ;
Yet to consult a little seem'd no crime,
The freakish humour of the present time :
But now to gather up what seems dispersed,
And touch the subject I design'd at first,
May prove, though much beside the rules of art,
Best for the public, and my wisest part.
And first, let no man charge me, that I mean
To close in sable every social scene,
And give good company a face severe,
As if they met around a father's bier ;
For tell some men, that pleasure all their bent,
And laughter all their work, is life misspent,
Their wisdom bursts into this sage reply,
Then mirth is sin, and we should always cry.
To find the medium asks some share of wit,
And therefore 'tis a mark fools never hit.
But though life's valley be a vale of tears,
A brighter scene beyond that vale appears,
Whose glory, with a light that never fades,
Shoots between scatter'd rocks and opening shades,
And, while it shows the land the soul desires,
The language of the land she seeks inspires.
Thus touch'd, the tongue receives a sacred cure
Of all that was absurd, profane, impure ;
Held within modest bounds, the tide of speech
Pursues the course that truth and nature teach ;

No longer labours merely to produce
The pomp of sound, or tinkle without use ;
Where'er it winds, the salutary stream,
Sprightly and fresh, enriches every theme,
While all the happy man possess'd before,
The gift of nature, or the classic store,
Is made subservient to the grand design,
For which Heaven form'd the faculty divine.
So should an idiot, while at large he strays,
Find the sweet lyre on which an artist plays,
With rash and awkward force the chords he shakes,
And grins with wonder at the jar he makes ;
But let the wise and well instructed hand
Once take the shell beneath his just command,
In gentle sounds it seems as it complain'd
Of the rude injuries it late sustain'd,
Till tuned at length to some immortal song,
It sounds Jehovah's name, and pours his praise
along.

RETIREMENT.

. studiis florens ignobilis otî.

VIRG. GEOR. LIB. 4.

HACKNEY'D in business, wearied at that oar,
Which thousands, once fast chain'd to, quit no
more,
But which, when life at ebb runs weak and low,
All wish, or seem to wish, they could forego ;
The statesman, lawyer, merchant, man of trade,
Pants for the refuge of some rural shade,
Where, all his long anxieties forgot
Amid the charms of a sequester'd spot,
Or recollected only to gild o'er,
And add a smile to what was sweet before,
He may possess the joys he thinks he sees,
Lay his old age upon the lap of ease,
Improve the remnant of his wasted span,
And, having lived a trifler, die a man.
Thus conscience pleads her cause within the breast,
Though long rebell'd against, not yet suppress'd,
And calls a creature form'd for God alone,
For Heaven's high purposes, and not his own,
Calls him away from selfish ends and aims,
From what debilitates and what inflames,

From cities humming with a restless crowd,
Sordid as active, ignorant as loud,
Whose highest praise is that they live in vain,
The dupes of pleasure, or the slaves of gain,
Where works of man are cluster'd close around,
And works of God are hardly to be found,
To regions where, in spite of sin and woe,
Traces of Eden are still seen below,
Where mountain, river, forest, field, and grove,
Remind him of his Maker's power and love.
'Tis well if, look'd for at so late a day,
In the last scene of such a senseless play,
True wisdom will attend his feeble call,
And grace his action ere the curtain fall.
Souls, that have long despised their heavenly birth,
Their wishes all impregnated with earth,
For threescore years employ'd with ceaseless care
In catching smoke and feeding upon air,
Conversant only with the ways of men,
Rarely redeem the short remaining ten.
Inveterate habits choke the unfruitful heart,
Their fibres penetrate its tenderest part,
And, draining its nutritious powers to feed
Their noxious growth, starve every better seed.

Happy, if full of days—but happier far,
If, ere we yet discern life's evening star,
Sick of the service of a world, that feeds
Its patient drudges with dry chaff and weeds,
We can escape from custom's idiot sway,
To serve the sovereign we were born to obey.

Then sweet to muse upon his skill display'd
(Infinite skill) in all that he has made !
To trace in nature's most minute design
The signature and stamp of power divine,
Contrivance intricate, express'd with ease,
Where unassisted sight no beauty sees,
The shapely limb and lubricated joint,
Within the small dimensions of a point,
Muscle and nerve miraculously spun,
His mighty work, who speaks and it is done,
The invisible in things scarce seen reveal'd,
To whom an atom is an ample field ;
To wonder at a thousand insect forms,
These hatch'd, and those resuscitated worms,
New life ordain'd and brighter scenes to share,
Once prone on earth, now buoyant upon air,
Whose shape would make them, had they bulk and
More hideous foes than fancy can devise ; [size,
With helmet-heads, and dragon-scales adorn'd,
The mighty myriads, now securely scorn'd,
Would mock the majesty of man's high birth,
Despise his bulwarks, and unpeople earth :
Then with a glance of fancy to survey,
Far as the faculty can stretch away,
Ten thousand rivers pour'd at his command,
From urns that never fail, through every land ;
These like a deluge with impetuous force,
Those winding modestly a silent course ;
The cloud-surmounting Alps, the fruitful vales ;
Seas, on which every nation spreads her sails ;

The sun, a world whence other worlds drink light,
The crescent moon, the diadem of night :
Stars countless, each in his appointed place,
Fast anchor'd in the deep abyss of space—
At such a sight to catch the poet's flame,
And with a rapture like his own exclaim,
These are thy glorious works, thou source of good,
How dimly seen, how faintly understood !
Thine, and upheld by thy paternal care,
This universal frame, thus wondrous fair ;
Thy power divine, and bounty beyond thought,
Adored and praised in all that thou hast wrought.
Absorb'd in that immensity I see,
I shrink abased, and yet aspire to thee ;
Instruct me, guide me to that heavenly day,
Thy words, more clearly than thy works, display,
That, while thy truths my grosser thoughts refine,
I may resemble thee, and call thee mine.

O blest proficiency ! surpassing all
That men erroneously their glory call,
The recompense that arts or arms can yield,
The bar, the senate, or the tented field.
Compared with this sublimest life below,
Ye kings and rulers, what have courts to show ?
Thus studied, used and consecrated thus,
On earth what is, seems form'd indeed for us ;
Not as the plaything of a froward child,
Fretful unless diverted and beguiled,
Much less to feed and fan the fatal fires
Of pride, ambition, or impure desires,

But as a scale, by which the soul ascends
From mighty means to more important ends,
Securely, though by steps but rarely trod,
Mounts from inferior beings up to God,
And sees, by no fallacious light or dim,
Earth made for man, and man himself for him.

Not that I mean to approve, or would enforce,
A superstitious and monastic course :
Truth is not local, God alike pervades
And fills the world of traffic and the shades,
And may be fear'd amid the busiest scenes,
Or scorn'd where business never intervenes.
But 'tis not easy with a mind like ours,
Conscious of weakness in its noblest powers,
And in a world where, other ills apart,
The roving eye misleads the careless heart,
To limit thought, by nature prone to stray
Wherever freakish fancy points the way ;
To bid the pleadings of self-love be still,
Resign our own and seek our Maker's will ;
To spread the page of scripture, and compare
Our conduct with the laws engraven there ;
To measure all that passes in the breast,
Faithfully, fairly, by that sacred test ;
To dive into the secret deeps within,
To spare no passion and no favourite sin,
And search the themes, important above all,
Ourselves, and our recovery from our fall.
But leisure, silence, and a mind released
From anxious thoughts how wealth may be in-
creased,

How to secure, in some propitious hour,
The point of interest or the post of power,
A soul serene, and equally retired
From objects too much dreaded or desired,
Safe from the clamours of perverse dispute,
At least are friendly to the great pursuit.

Opening the map of God's extensive plan,
We find a little isle, this life of man ;
Eternity's unknown expanse appears
Circling around and limiting his years.
The busy race examine and explore
Each creek and cavern of the dangerous shore,
With care collect what in their eyes excels,
Some shining pebbles, and some weeds and shells ;
Thus laden, dream that they are rich and great,
And happiest he that groans beneath his weight.
The waves o'ertake them in their serious play,
And every hour sweeps multitudes away ;
They shriek and sink, survivors start and weep,
Pursue their sport, and follow to the deep.
A few forsake the throng ; with lifted eyes
Ask wealth of Heaven, and gain a real prize,
Truth, wisdom, grace, and peace like that above,
Seal'd with his signet, whom they serve and love ;
Scorn'd by the rest, with patient hope they wait
A kind release from their imperfect state,
And unregretted are soon snatch'd away
From scenes of sorrow into glorious day.

Nor these alone prefer a life recluse,
Who seek retirement for its proper use ;

The love of change, that lives in every breast,
Genius and temper, and desire of rest,
Discordant motives in one centre meet,
And each inclines its votary to retreat.
Some minds by nature are averse to noise,
And hate the tumult half the world enjoys,
The lure of avarice, or the pompous prize
That courts display before ambitious yes;
The fruits that hang on pleasure's flowery stem,
Whate'er enchants them, are no snares to them.
To them the deep recess of dusky groves,
Or forest, where the deer securely roves,
The fall of waters, and the song of birds,
And hills that echo to the distant herds,
Are luxuries excelling all the glare
The world can boast, and her chief favourites share.
With eager step, and carelessly array'd,
For such a cause the poet seeks the shade,
From all he sees he catches new delight,
Pleased Fancy claps her pinions at the sight,
The rising or the setting orb of day,
The clouds that flit, or slowly float away,
Nature in all the various shapes she wears,
Frowning in storms, or breathing gentle airs,
The snowy robe her wintry state assumes,
Her summer heats, her fruits, and her perfumes,
All, all alike transport the glowing bard,
Success in rhyme his glory and reward.
O Nature! whose Elysian scenes disclose
His bright perfections at whose word they rose,

Next to that power who form'd thee and sustains,
Be thou the great inspirer of my strains.
Still, as I touch the lyre, do thou expand
Thy genuine charms, and guide an artless hand,
That I may catch a fire but rarely known,
Give useful light though I should miss renown,
And, poring on thy page, whose every line
Bears proof of an intelligence divine,
May feel a heart enrich'd by what it pays,
That builds its glory on its Maker's praise.
Woe to the man whose wit disclaims its use,
Glittering in vain, or only to seduce,
Who studies nature with a wanton eye,
Admires the work, but slips the lesson by ;
His hours of leisure and recess employs
In drawing pictures of forbidden joys,
Retires to blazon his own worthless name,
Or shoot the careless with a surer aim.

The lover too shuns business and alarms,
Tender idolater of absent charms.
Saints offer nothing in their warmest prayers
That he devotes not with a zeal like theirs ;
'Tis consecration of his heart, soul, time,
And every thought that wanders is a crime.
In sighs he worships his supremely fair,
And weeps a sad libation in despair ;
Adores a creature, and, devout in vain,
Wins in return an answer of disdain.
As woodbine weds the plant within her reach,
Rough elm, or smooth-grain'd ash, or glossy beech,

In spiral rings ascends the trunk, and lays
Her golden tassels on the leafy sprays,
But does a mischief while she lends a grace,
Straitening its growth by such a strict embrace ;
So love, that clings around the noblest minds,
Forbids the advancement of the soul he binds ;
The suitor's air indeed he soon improves,
And forms it to the taste of her he loves,
Teaches his eyes a language, and no less
Refines his speech, and fashions his address ;
But farewell promises of happier fruits,
Manly designs, and learning's grave pursuits ;
Girt with a chain he cannot wish to break,
His only bliss is sorrow for her sake ;
Who will may pant for glory and excel,
Her smile his aim, all higher aims farewell !
Thyrsis, Alexis, or whatever name
May least offend against so pure a flame,
Though sage advice of friends the most sincere
Sounds harshly in so delicate an ear,
And lovers, of all creatures, tame or wild,
Can least brook management, however mild,
Yet let a poet (poetry disarms
The fiercest animals with magic charms)
Risk an intrusion on thy pensive mood,
And woo and win thee to thy proper good.
Pastoral images and still retreats,
Umbrageous walks and solitary seats,
Sweet birds in concert with harmonious streams,
Soft airs, nocturnal vigils, and day dreams,

Are all enchantments in a case like thine,
Conspire against thy peace with one design,
Soothe thee to make thee but a surer prey,
And feed the fire that wastes thy powers away.
Up—God has form'd thee with a wiser view,
Not to be led in chains, but to subdue;
Calls thee to cope with enemies, and first
Points out a conflict with thyself, the worst.
Woman indeed, a gift he would bestow
When he design'd a Paradise below,
The richest earthly boon his hands afford,
Deserves to be beloved, but not adored.
Post away swiftly to more active scenes,
Collect the scatter'd truths that study gleans,
Mix with the world, but with its wiser part,
No longer give an image all thine heart;
Its empire is not hers, nor is it thine,
'Tis God's just claim, prerogative divine.

Virtuous and faithful Heberden, whose skill
Attempts no task it cannot well fulfill,
Gives melancholy up to nature's care,
And sends the patient into purer air.
Look where he comes—in this embower'd alcove
Stand close conceal'd, and see a statue move:
Lips busy, and eyes fix'd, foot falling slow,
Arms hanging idly down, hands clasp'd below,
Interpret to the marking eye distress,
Such as its symptoms can alone express.
That tongue is silent now; that silent tongue
Could argue once, could jest or join the song,

Could give advice, could censure or commend,
Or charm the sorrows of a drooping friend.
Renounced alike its office and its sport,
Its brisker and its graver strains fall short ;
Both fail beneath a fever's secret sway,
And like a summer brook are past away.
This is a sight for pity to peruse,
Till she resemble faintly what she views,
Till sympathy contract a kindred pain,
Pierced with the woes that she laments in vain.
This, of all maladies that man infest,
Claims most compassion, and receives the least :
Job felt it, when he groan'd beneath the rod
And the barb'd arrows of a frowning God ;
And such emollients as his friends could spare,
Friends such as his for modern Jobs prepare.
Blest, rather curst, with hearts that never feel,
Kept snug in caskets of close-hammer'd steel,
With mouths made only to grin wide and eat,
And minds that deem derided pain a treat,
With limbs of British oak, and nerves of wire,
And wit that puppet prompters might inspire,
Their sovereign nostrum is a clumsy joke
On pangs enforced with God's severest stroke.
But with a soul that ever felt the sting
Of sorrow, sorrow is a sacred thing :
Not to molest, or irritate, or raise
A laugh at his expense, is slender praise ;
He that has not usurp'd the name of man
Does all, and deems too little all, he can,

To assuage the throbbings of the fester'd part,
And staunch the bleedings of a broken heart.
'Tis not, as heads that never ache suppose,
Forgery of fancy, and a dream of woes ;
Man is a harp, whose chords elude the sight,
Each yielding harmony disposed aright ;
The screws reversed (a task which if he please
God in a moment executes with ease),
Ten thousand thousand strings at once go loose,
Lost, till he tune them, all their power and use.
Then neither heathy wilds, nor scenes as fair
As ever recompensed the peasant's care,
Nor soft declivities with tufted hills,
Nor view of waters turning busy mills,
Parks in which art preceptress nature weds,
Nor gardens interspersed with flowery beds,
Nor gales, that catch the scent of blooming groves,
And waft it to the mourner as he roves,
Can call up life into his faded eye,
That passes all he sees unheeded by ;
No wounds like those a wounded spirit feels,
No cure for such, till God who makes them heals.
And thou, sad sufferer under nameless ill
That yields not to the touch of human skill,
Improve the kind occasion, understand
A father's frown, and kiss his chastening hand.
To thee the dayspring, and the blaze of noon,
The purple evening and resplendent moon,
The stars that, sprinkled o'er the vault of night,
Seem drops descending in a shower of light,

Shine not, or undesired and hated shine,
Seen through the medium of a cloud like thine :
Yet seek him, in his favour life is found,
All bliss beside a shadow or a sound :
Then heaven, eclipsed so long, and this dull earth,
Shall seem to start into a second birth ;
Nature, assuming a more lovely face,
Borrowing a beauty from the works of grace,
Shall be despised and overlook'd no more,
Shall fill thee with delights unfelt before,
Impart to things inanimate a voice,
And bid her mountains and her hills rejoice ;
The sound shall run along the winding vales,
And thou enjoy an Eden ere it fails.

Ye groves (the statesman at his desk exclaims,
Sick of a thousand disappointed aims),
My patrimonial treasure and my pride,
Beneath your shades your gray possessor hide,
Receive me, languishing for that repose
The servant of the public never knows.
Ye saw me once (ah, those regretted days,
When boyish innocence was all my praise !)
Hour after hour delightfully allot
To studies then familiar, since forgot,
And cultivate a taste for ancient song,
Catching its ardour as I mused along ;
Nor seldom, as propitious heaven might send,
What once I valued and could boast, a friend,
Were witnesses how cordially I press'd
His undissembling virtue to my breast ;

Receive me now, not uncorrupt as then,
Nor guiltless of corrupting other men,
But versed in arts that, while they seem to stay
A falling empire, hasten its decay.
To the fair haven of my native home,
The wreck of what I was, fatigued I come ;
For once I can approve the patriot's voice,
And make the course he recommends my choice :
We meet at last in one sincere desire,
His wish and mine both prompt me to retire.
'Tis done—he steps into the welcome chaise,
Lolls at his ease behind four handsome bays,
That whirl away from business and debate
The disencumber'd Atlas of the state.
Ask not the boy, who, when the breeze of morn
First shakes the glittering drops from every thorn,
Unfolds his flock, then under bank or bush
Sits linking cherry stones, or platting rush,
How fair is Freedom ?—he was always free :
To carve his rustic name upon a tree,
To snare the mole, or with ill fashion'd hook
To draw the incautious minnow from the brook,
Are life's prime pleasures in his simple view,
His flock the chief concern he ever knew ;
She shines but little in his heedless eyes,
The good we never miss we rarely prize :
But ask the noble drudge in state affairs,
Escaped from office and its constant cares,
What charms he sees in Freedom's smile express'd,
In freedom lost so long, now repossess'd ;

The tongue whose strains were cogent as commands,
Revered at home, and felt in foreign lands,
Shall own itself a stammerer in that cause,
Or plead its silence as its best applause.
He knows indeed that, whether dress'd or rude,
Wild without art, or artfully subdued,
Nature in every form inspires delight,
But never mark'd her with so just a sight.
Her hedge row shrubs, a variegated store,
With woodbine and wild roses mantled o'er,
Green balks and furrow'd lands, the stream that
Its cooling vapour o'er the dewy meads, [spreads
Downs, that almost escape the inquiring eye,
That melt and fade into the distant sky,
Beauties he lately slighted as he pass'd,
Seem all created since he travell'd last.
Master of all the enjoyments he design'd,
No rough annoyance rankling in his mind,
What early philosophic hours he keeps,
How regular his meals, how sound he sleeps!
Not sounder he that on the mainmast head,
While morning kindles with a windy red,
Begins a long look out for distant land,
Nor quits till evening watch his giddy stand,
Then swift descending with a seaman's haste,
Slips to his hammock, and forgets the blast.
He chooses company, but not the squire's,
Whose wit is rudeness, whose good breeding tires;
Nor yet the parson's, who would gladly come,
Obsequious when abroad, though proud at home;

Nor can he much affect the neighbouring peer,
Whose toe of emulation treads too near;
But wisely seeks a more convenient friend,
With whom, dismissing forms, he may unbend.
A man, whom marks of condescending grace
Teach, while they flatter him, his proper place;
Who comes when call'd, and at a word withdraws,
Speaks with reserve, and listens with applause;
Some plain mechanic, who, without pretence
To birth or wit, nor gives nor takes offence;
On whom he rests well pleased his weary powers,
And talks and laughs away his vacant hours.
The tide of life, swift always in its course,
May run in cities with a brisker force,
But no where with a current so serene,
Or half so clear, as in the rural scene.
Yet how fallacious is all earthly bliss,
What obvious truths the wisest heads may miss;
Some pleasures live a month, and some a year,
But short the date of all we gather here;
No happiness is felt, except the true,
That does not charm the more for being new.
This observation, as it chanced, not made,
Or, if the thought occur'd, not duly weigh'd,
He sighs—for after all by slow degrees
The spot he loved has lost the power to please;
To cross his ambling pony day by day,
Seems at the best but dreaming life away;
The prospect, such as might enchant despair,
He views it not, or sees no beauty there;

With aching heart, and discontented looks,
Returns at noon to billiards or to books,
But feels, while grasping at his faded joys,
A secret thirst of his renounced employs.
He chides the tardiness of every post,
Pants to be told of battles won or lost,
Blames his own indolence, observes, though late,
'Tis criminal to leave a sinking state,
Flies to the levee, and, received with grace,
Kneels, kisses hands, and shines again in place.

Suburban villas, highway-side retreats,
That dread the encroachment of our growing streets,
Tight boxes, neatly sash'd, and in a blaze
With all a July sun's collected rays,
Delight the citizen, who, gasping there,
Breathes clouds of dust, and calls it country air.
O sweet retirement, who would balk the thought,
That could afford retirement, or could not?
'Tis such an easy walk, so smooth and straight,
The second milestone fronts the garden gate;
A step if fair, and, if a shower approach,
You find safe shelter in the next stage coach.
There, prison'd in a parlour snug and small,
Like bottled wasps upon a southern wall,
The man of business and his friends compress'd
Forget their labours, and yet find no rest;
But still 'tis rural—trees are to be seen
From every window, and the fields are green;
Ducks paddle in the pond before the door,
And what could a remoter scene show more?

A sense of elegance we rarely find
The portion of a mean or vulgar mind,
And ignorance of better things makes man,
Who cannot much, rejoice in what he can ;
And he, that deems his leisure well bestow'd
In contemplation of a turnpike road,
Is occupied as well, employs his hours
As wisely, and as much improves his powers,
As he that slumbers in pavilions graced
With all the charms of an accomplish'd taste.
Yet hence, alas ! insolvencies ; and hence
The unpitied victim of ill judged expense,
From all his wearisome engagements freed,
Shakes hands with business, and retires indeed.

Your prudent grandmammass, ye modern belles,
Content with Bristol, Bath, and Tunbridge Wells,
When health required it, would consent to roam,
Else more attach'd to pleasures found at home.
But now alike, gay widow, virgin, wife,
Ingenious to diversify dull life,
In coaches, chaises, caravans, and hoys,
Fly to the coast for daily, nightly joys,
And all, impatient of dry land, agree
With one consent to rush into the sea.
Ocean exhibits, fathomless and broad,
Much of the power and majesty of God.
He swathes about the swelling of the deep,
That shines and rests, as infants smile and sleep ;
Vast as it is, it answers as it flows
The breathings of the lightest air that blows ;

Curling and whitening over all the waste,
The rising waves obey the increasing blast,
Abrupt and horrid as the tempest roars,
Thunder and flash upon the steadfast shores,
Till he, that rides the whirlwind, checks the rein,
Then all the world of waters sleeps again.
Nereids or Dryads, as the fashion leads,
Now in the floods, now panting in the meads,
Votaries of pleasure still, where'er she dwells,
Near barren rocks, in palaces, or cells,
O grant a poet leave to recommend
(A poet fond of nature, and your friend)
Her slighted works to your admiring view ;
Her works must needs excel, who fashion'd you.
Would ye, when rambling in your morning ride,
With some unmeaning coxcomb at your side,
Condemn the prattler for his idle pains,
To waste unheard the music of his strains,
And, deaf to all the impertinence of tongue,
That, while it courts, affronts and does you wrong,
Mark well the finish'd plan without a fault,
The seas globose and huge, the o'erarching vault,
Earth's millions daily fed, a world employ'd
In gathering plenty yet to be enjoy'd,
Till gratitude grew vocal in the praise
Of God, beneficent in all his ways ;
Graced with such wisdom, how would beauty shine !
Ye want but that to seem indeed divine.

Anticipated rents, and bills unpaid,
Force many a shining youth into the shade,

Not to redeem his time, but his estate,
And play the fool, but at a cheaper rate.
There, hid in loathed obscurity, removed
From pleasures left, but never more beloved,
He just endures, and with a sickly spleen
Sighs o'er the beauties of the charming scene.
Nature indeed looks prettily in rhyme ;
Streams tinkle sweetly in poetic chime :
The warblings of the blackbird, clear and strong,
Are musical enough in Thomson's song ;
And Cobham's groves, and Windsor's green retreats,
When Pope describes them, have a thousand sweets ;
He likes the country, but in truth must own,
Most likes it, when he studies it in town.

Poor Jack—no matter who—for when I blame,
I pity, and must therefore sink the name,
Lived in his saddle, loved the chase, the course,
And always, ere he mounted, kiss'd his horse.
The estate, his sires had own'd in ancient years,
Was quickly distanced, match'd against a peer's.
Jack vanish'd, was regretted and forgot ;
'Tis wild good nature's never failing lot.
At length, when all had long supposed him dead,
By cold submersion, razor, rope, or lead,
My lord, alighting at his usual place,
The Crown, took notice of an ostler's face.
Jack knew his friend, but hoped in that disguise
He might escape the most observing eyes,
And whistling, as if unconcern'd and gay,
Curried his nag, and look'd another way.

Convinced at last, upon a nearer view,
'Twas he, the same, the very Jack he knew,
O'erwhelm'd at once with wonder, grief, and joy,
He press'd him much to quit his base employ ;
His countenance, his purse, his heart, his hand,
Influence and power, were all at his command :
Peers are not always generous as well bred,
But Granby was, meant truly what he said.
Jack bow'd, and was obliged—confess'd 'twas
strange,

That so retired he should not wish a change,
But knew no medium between guzzling beer,
And his old stint—three thousand pounds a year.

Thus some retire to nourish hopeless woe ;
Some seeking happiness not found below ;
Some to comply with humour, and a mind
To social scenes by nature disinclined ;
Some sway'd by fashion, some by deep disgust ;
Some self-impoverish'd, and because they must ;
But few, that court Retirement, are aware
Of half the toils they must encounter there.

Lucrative offices are seldom lost
For want of powers proportion'd to the post :
Give e'en a dunce the employment he desires,
And he soon finds the talents it requires ;
A business with an income at its heels
Furnishes always oil for its own wheels.
But in his arduous enterprise to close
His active years with indolent repose,
He finds the labours of that state exceed
His utmost faculties, severe indeed.

'Tis easy to resign a toilsome place,
But not to manage leisure with a grace ;
Absence of occupation is not rest,
A mind quite vacant is a mind distress'd.
The veteran steed, excused his task at length,
In kind compassion of his failing strength,
And turn'd into the park or mead to graze,
Exempt from future service all his days,
There feels a pleasure perfect in its kind,
Ranges at liberty, and snuffs the wind :
But when his lord would quit the busy road,
To taste a joy like that he has bestow'd,
He proves, less happy than his favour'd brute,
A life of ease a difficult pursuit.
Thought, to the man that never thinks, may seem
As natural as when asleep to dream ;
But reveries (for human minds will act)
Specious in show, impossible in fact,
Those flimsy webs, that break as soon as wrought,
Attain not to the dignity of thought :
Nor yet the swarms that occupy the brain,
Where dreams of dress, intrigue, and pleasure reign ;
Nor such as useless conversation breeds,
Or lust engenders, and indulgence feeds.
Whence, and what are we ? to what end ordain'd ?
What means the drama by the world sustain'd ?
Business or vain amusement, care or mirth,
Divide the frail inhabitants of earth.
Is duty a mere sport, or an employ ?
Life an intrusted talent, or a toy ?

Is there, as reason, conscience, Scripture say,
Cause to provide for a great future day,
When, earth's assign'd duration at an end,
Man shall be summon'd and the dead attend ?
The trumpet—will it sound ? the curtain rise ?
And show the august tribunal of the skies,
Where no prevarication shall avail,
Where eloquence and artifice shall fail,
The pride of arrogant distinctions fall,
And conscience and our conduct judge us all ?
Pardon me, ye that give the midnight oil
To learned cares or philosophic toil,
Though I revere your honourable names,
Your useful labours, and important aims,
And hold the world indebted to your aid,
Enrich'd with the discoveries ye have made ;
Yet let me stand excused, if I esteem
A mind employ'd on so sublime a theme,
Pushing her bold inquiry to the date
And outline of the present transient state,
And, after poisoning her adventurous wings,
Settling at last upon eternal things,
Far more intelligent, and better taught
The strenuous use of profitable thought,
Than ye, when happiest, and enlighten'd most,
And highest in renown, can justly boast.

A mind unnerved, or indisposed to bear
The weight of subjects worthiest of her care,
Whatever hopes a change of scene inspires,
Must change her nature, or in vain retires.

An idler is a watch that wants both hands ;
As useless if it goes as when it stands.
Books, therefore, not the scandal of the shelves,
In which lewd sensualists print out themselves ;
Nor those, in which the stage gives vice a blow,
With what success let modern manners show ;
Nor his who, for the bane of thousands born,
Built God a church, and laugh'd his word to scorn,
Skilful alike to seem devout and just,
And stab religion with a sly side thrust ;
Nor those of learn'd philologists, who chase
A panting syllable through time and space,
Start it at home, and hunt it in the dark,
To Gaul, to Greece, and into Noah's ark ;
But such as learning without false pretence,
The friend of truth, the associate of sound sense,
And such as, in the zeal of good design,
Strong judgment labouring in the scripture mine,
All such as manly and great souls produce,
Worthy to live, and of eternal use :
Behold in these what leisure hours demand,
Amusement and true knowledge hand in hand.
Luxury gives the mind a childish cast,
And, while she polishes, perverts the taste ;
Habits of close attention, thinking heads,
Become more rare as dissipation spreads,
Till authors hear at length one general cry,
Tickle and entertain us, or we die.
The loud demand, from year to year the same,
Beggars invention, and makes fancy lame ;

Till farce itself, most mournfully jejune,
Calls for the kind assistance of a tune ;
And novels (witness every month's review)
Belle their name, and offer nothing new.
The mind, relaxing into needful sport,
Should turn to writers of an abler sort,
Whose wit well managed, and whose classic style,
Give truth a lustre, and make wisdom smile.
Friends (for I cannot stint, as some have done,
Too rigid in my view, that name to one ;
Though one, I grant it, in the generous breast
Will stand advanced a step above the rest ;
Flowers by that name promiscuously we call,
But one, the rose, the regent of 'them all)—
Friends, not adopted with a schoolboy's haste,
But chosen with a nice discerning taste,
Well born, well disciplined, who, placed apart
From vulgar minds, have honour much at heart,
And, though the world may think the ingredients
The love of virtue, and the fear of God ! [odd,
Such friends prevent what else would soon succeed,
A temper rustic as the life we lead,
And keep the polish of the manners clean,
As theirs who bustle in the busiest scene ;
For solitude, however some may rave,
Seeming a sanctuary, proves a grave,
A sepulchre, in which the living lie,
Where all good qualities grow sick and die.
I praise the Frenchman,* his remark was shrewd—
How sweet, how passing sweet is solitude !

* Bruyere.

But grant me still a friend in my retreat,
Whom I may whisper—solitude is sweet.
Yet neither these delights, nor aught beside,
That appetite can ask, or wealth provide,
Can save us always from a tedious day,
Or shine the dulness of still life away ;
Divine communion, carefully enjoy'd,
Or sought with energy, must fill the void.
O, sacred art ! to which alone life owes
Its happiest seasons, and a peaceful close.
Scorn'd in a world, indebted to that scorn
For evils daily felt and hardly borne,
Not knowing thee, we reap, with bleeding hands,
Flowers of rank odour upon thorny lands,
And, while experience cautions us in vain,
Grasp seeming happiness, and find it pain.
Despondence, self-deserted in her grief,
Lost by abandoning her own relief,
Murmuring and ungrateful discontent,
That scorns afflictions mercifully meant,
Those humours, tart as wines upon the fret,
Which idleness and weariness beget ; [breast,
These, and a thousand plagues that haunt the
Fond of the phantom of an earthly rest,
Divine communion chases, as the day
Drives to their dens the obedient beasts of prey.
See Judah's promised king, bereft of all,
Driven out an exile from the face of Saul,
To distant caves the lonely wanderer flies,
To seek that peace a tyrant's frown denies.

Hear the sweet accents of his tuneful voice,
Hear him o'erwhelm'd with sorrow, yet rejoice ;
No womanish or wailing grief has part,
No, not a moment, in his royal heart ;
'Tis manly music, such as martyrs make,
Suffering with gladness for a Saviour's sake ;
His soul exults, hope animates his lays,
The sense of mercy kindles into praise,
And wilds, familiar with a lion's roar,
Ring with ecstatic sounds unheard before :
'Tis love like his that can alone defeat
The foes of man, or make a desert sweet.

Religion does not censure or exclude
Unnumber'd pleasures harmlessly pursued ;
To study culture, and with artful toil
To meliorate and tame the stubborn soil ;
To give dissimilar yet fruitful lands
The grain, or herb, or plant that each demands ;
To cherish virtue in an humble state,
And share the joys your bounty may create ;
To mark the matchless workings of the power
That shuts within its seed the future flower,
Bids these in elegance of form excel,
In colour these, and those delight the smell,
Sends Nature forth the daughter of the skies,
To dance on earth, and charm all human eyes ;
To teach the canvass innocent deceit,
Or lay the landscape on the snowy sheet—
These, these are arts pursued without a crime,
That leave no stain upon the wing of time.

Me poetry (or rather notes that aim,
Feebly and vainly, at poetic fame)
Employs, shut out from more important views,
Fast by the banks of the slow winding Ouse ;
Content if thus sequester'd I may raise
A monitor's, though not a poet's praise,
And while I teach an art too little known,
To close life wisely, may not waste my own.

THE YEARLY DISTRESS, OR TITHING
TIME AT STOCK, IN ESSEX.

Verses addressed to a country clergyman complaining of the disagreeableness of the day annually appointed for receiving the dues at the parsonage.

COME, ponder well, for 'tis no jest,
To laugh it would be wrong,
The troubles of a worthy priest,
The burden of my song.

This priest he merry is and blithe
Three quarters of a year,
But oh ! it cuts him like a sithe
When tithing time draws near.

He then is full of fright and fears,
As one at point to die,
And long before the day appears
He heaves up many a sigh.

For then the farmers come jog, jog,
Along the miry road,
Each heart as heavy as a log,
To make their payments good.

In sooth the sorrow of such days
Is not to be express'd,
When he that takes and he that pays
Are both alike distress'd.

Now all unwelcome at his gates
The clumsy swains alight,
With rueful faces and bald pates—
He trembles at the sight.

And well he may, for well he knows
Each bumpkin of the clan,
Instead of paying what he owes,
Will cheat him if he can.

So in they come—each makes his leg,
And flings his head before,
And looks as if he came to beg,
And not to quit a score.

“ And how does miss and madam do,
The little boy and all ?”
“ All tight and well. And how do you,
Good Mr. What-d’ye-call ?”

The dinner comes, and down they sit :
Were e’er such hungry folk ?
There’s little talking, and no wit ;
It is no time to joke.

One wipes his nose upon his sleeve,
One spits upon the floor,
Yet, not to give offence or grieve,
Holds up the cloth before.

The punch goes round, and they are dull
And lumpish still as ever ;
Like barrels with their bellies full,
They only weigh the heavier.

At length the busy time begins.
“ Come, neighbours, we must wag—”
The money chinks, down drop their chins,
Each lugging out his bag.

One talks of mildew and of frost,
And one of storms of hail,
And one of pigs that he has lost
By maggots at the tail.

Quoth one, “ A rarer man than you
In pulpit none shall hear :
But yet, methinks, to tell you true,
You sell it plaguy dear.”

O why are farmers made so coarse,
Or clergy made so fine ?
A kick, that scarce would move a horse,
May kill a sound divine.

Then let the boobies stay at home ;
’Twould cost him, I dare say,
Less trouble taking twice the sum
Without the clowns that pay.

SONNET

ADDRESSED TO HENRY COWPER, ESQ.

On his emphatical and interesting delivery of the defence of
Warren Hastings, Esq. in the House of Lords.

COWPER, whose silver voice, task'd sometimes hard,
Legends prolix delivers in the ears
(Attentive when thou read'st) of England's peers,
Let verse at length yield thee thy just reward.

Thou wast not heard with drowsy disregard,
Expending late on all that length of plea
Thy generous powers, but silence honour'd thee,
Mute as e'er gazed on orator or bard.

Thou art not voice alone, but hast beside
Both heart and head; and couldst with music
sweet
Of Attic phrase and senatorial tone,
Like thy renown'd forefathers, far and wide
Thy fame diffuse, praised not for utterance meet
Of others' speech, but magic of thy own.

LINES ADDRESSED TO DR. DARWIN,

AUTHOR OF "THE BOTANIC GARDEN."

Two Poets,* (poets, by report,
Not oft so well agree)
Sweet harmonist of Flora's court!
Conspire to honour thee.

They best can judge a poet's worth
Who oft themselves have known
The pangs of a poetic birth
By labours of their own.

We therefore pleased extol thy song,
Though various, yet complete,
Rich in embellishment as strong,
And learned as 'tis sweet.

No envy mingles with our praise,
Though, could our hearts repine
At any poet's happier lays,
They would—they must at thine.

But we, in mutual bondage knit
Of friendship's closest tie,
Can gaze on even Darwin's wit
With an unjaundiced eye ;

* Alluding to the poem by Mr. Hayley, which accompanied these lines.

And deem the Bard, whoe'er he be,
 And howsoever known,
 Who would not twine a wreath for thee,
 Unworthy of his own.

ON MRS. MONTAGU'S FEATHER-HANGINGS.

THE birds put off their every hue,
 To dress a room for Montagu.

The peacock sends his heavenly dyes,
 His rainbows and his starry eyes ;
 The pheasant plumes, which round infold
 His mantling neck with downy gold ;
 The cock his arch'd tail's azure show ;
 And, river-blanch'd, the swan his snow.
 All tribes beside of Indian name,
 That glossy shine, or vivid flame,
 Where rises, and where sets the day,
 Whate'er they boast of rich and gay,
 Contribute to the gorgeous plan,
 Proud to advance it all they can.
 This plumage neither dashing shower,
 Nor blasts, that shake the dripping bower,
 Shall drench again or discompose,
 But, screen'd from every storm that blows,
 It boasts a splendour ever new,
 Safe with protecting Montagu.

To the same patroness resort,
Secure of favour at her court,
Strong genius, from whose forge of thought
Forms rise, to quick perfection wrought,
Which, though new-born, with vigour move,
Like Pallas springing arm'd from Jove—
Imagination scattering round
Wild roses over furrow'd ground,
Which labour of his frown beguile,
And teach philosophy a smile—
Wit flashing on religion's side,
Whose fires, to sacred truth applied,
The gem, though luminous before,
Obtrude on human notice more,
Like sunbeams on the golden height
Of some tall temple playing bright—
Well tutor'd learning, from his books
Dismiss'd with grave, not haughty, looks,
Their order on his shelves exact,
Nor more harmonious or compact
Than that to which he keeps confined
The various treasures of his mind—
All these to Montagu's repair,
Ambitious of a shelter there.
There genius, learning, fancy, wit,
Their ruffled plumage calm refit,
(For stormy troubles loudest roar
Around their flight who highest soar)
And in her eye, and by her aid,
Shine safe without a fear to fade.

She thus maintains divided sway
With yon bright regent of the day ;
The plume and poet both we know
Their lustre to his influence owe ;
And she the works of Phœbus aiding,
Both poet saves and plume from fading.

VERSES

Supposed to be written by Alexander Selkirk, during his
solitary abode in the island of Juan Fernandez.

I AM monarch of all I survey,
My right there is none to dispute ;
From the centre all round to the sea
I am lord of the fowl and the brute.
O Solitude ! where are the charms
That sages have seen in thy face ?
Better dwell in the midst of alarms
Than reign in this horrible place.

I am out of humanity's reach,
I must finish my journey alone,
Never hear the sweet music of speech,
I start at the sound of my own.
The beasts, that roam over the plain,
My form with indifference see ;
They are so unacquainted with man,
Their tameness is shocking to me.

Society, friendship, and love,
Divinely bestow'd upon man,
O, had I the wings of a dove,
How soon would I taste you again !
My sorrows I then might assuage
In the ways of religion and truth,
Might learn from the wisdom of age,
And be cheer'd by the sallies of youth.

Religion ! what treasure untold
Resides in that heavenly word !
More precious than silver and gold,
Or all that this earth can afford,
But the sound of the church-going bell
These valleys and rocks never heard,
Never sigh'd at the sound of a knell,
Or smiled when a sabbath appear'd.

Ye winds, that have made me your sport,
Convey to this desolate shore
Some cordial endearing report
Of a land I shall visit no more.
My friends, do they now and then send
A wish or a thought after me ?
O tell me I yet have a friend,
Though a friend I am never to see.

How fleet is a glance of the mind !
Compared with the speed of its flight,
The tempest itself lags behind,
And the swift-winged arrows of light.

When I think of my own native land,
In a moment I seem to be there ;
But alas ! recollection at hand
Soon hurries me back to despair.

But the seafowl is gone to her nest,
The beast is laid down in his lair ;
Even here is a season of rest,
And I to my cabin repair.
There's mercy in every place,
And mercy, encouraging thought !
Gives even affliction a grace,
And reconciles man to his lot.

ON

OBSERVING SOME NAMES OF LITTLE NOTE

RECORDED IN THE BIOGRAPHIA BRITANNICA.

OH, fond attempt to give a deathless lot
To names ignoble, born to be forgot !
In vain, recorded in historic page,
They court the notice of a future age :
Those twinkling tiny lustres of the land
Drop one by one from Fame's neglecting hand ;
Lethæan gulfs receive them as they fall,
And dark oblivion soon absorbs them all.

So when a child, as playful children use,
Has burnt to tinder a stale last year's news,
The flame extinct, he views the roving fire—
There goes my lady, and there goes the squire,
There goes the parson, oh illustrious spark !
And there, scarce less illustrious, goes the clerk !

REPORT OF AN ADJUDGED CASE,

NOT TO BE FOUND IN ANY OF THE BOOKS.

BETWEEN Nose and Eyes a strange contest arose,
The spectacles set them unhappily wrong ;
The point in dispute was, as all the world knows,
To which the said spectacles ought to belong.

So Tongue was the lawyer, and argued the cause
With a great deal of skill, and a wig full of
learning ;
While chief baron Ear sat to balance the laws,
So famed for his talent in nicely discerning.

In behalf of the Nose it will quickly appear,
And your lordship, he said, will undoubtedly
find
That the Nose has had spectacles always in wear,
Which amounts to possession time out of mind.

Then holding the spectacles up to the court—
Your lordship observes they are made with a
straddle,
As wide as the ridge of the Nose is ; in short,
Design'd to sit close to it, just like a saddle.

Again, would your lordship a moment suppose
('Tis a case that has happen'd, and may be
again)
That the visage or countenance had not a Nose,
Pray who would, or who could, wear spectacles
then ?

On the whole it appears, and my argument shows,
With a reasoning the court will never condemn,
That the spectacles plainly were made for the
Nose,
And the Nose was as plainly intended for them.

Then shifting his side, (as a lawyer knows how),
He pleaded again in behalf of the Eyes :
But what were his arguments few people know,
For the court did not think they were equally
wise.

So his lordship decreed with a grave solemn tone,
Decisive and clear, without one if or but—
That, whenever the Nose put his spectacles on,
By daylight or candlelight—Eyes should be
shut !

ON THE
PROMOTION OF EDWARD THURLOW, ESQ.
TO THE LORD HIGH CHANCELLORSHIP OF ENGLAND.

ROUND Thurlow's head in early youth,
And in his sportive days,
Fair Science pour'd the light of truth,
And Genius shed his rays.

See ! with united wonder cried
The experienced and the sage,
Ambition in a boy supplied
With all the skill of age !

Discernment, eloquence, and grace
Proclaim him born to sway
The balance in the highest place,
And bear the palm away.

The praise bestow'd was just and wise ;
He sprang impetuous forth,
Secure of conquest, where the prize
Attends superior worth.

So the best courser on the plain
Ere yet he starts is known,
And does but at the goal obtain
What all had deem'd his own.

ODE TO PEACE.

COME, peace of mind, delightful guest !
Return and make thy downy nest

Once more in this sad heart :
Nor riches I nor power pursue,
Nor hold forbidden joys in view ;
We therefore need not part.

Where wilt thou dwell, if not with me,
From avarice and ambition free,

And pleasure's fatal wiles ?
For whom, alas ! dost thou prepare
The sweets that I was wont to share,
The banquet of thy smiles ?

The great, the gay, shall they partake
The Heaven that thou alone canst make ?

And wilt thou quit the stream
That murmurs through the dewy mead,
The grove and the sequester'd shed,
To be a guest with them ?

For thee I panted, thee I prized,
For thee I gladly sacrificed

Whate'er I loved before ;
And shall I see thee start away,
And helpless, hopeless, hear thee say—
Farewell ! we meet no more ?

HUMAN FRAILTY.

WEAK and irresolute is man ;
The purpose of to-day,
Woven with pains into his plan,
To-morrow rends away.

The bow well bent, and smart the spring,
Vice seems already slain ;
But Passion rudely snaps the string,
And it revives again.

Some foe to his upright intent
Finds out his weaker part ;
Virtue engages his assent,
But Pleasure wins his heart.

'Tis here the folly of the wise
Through all his art we view ;
And, while his tongue the charge denies,
His conscience owns it true.

Bound on a voyage of awful length
And dangers little known,
A stranger to superior strength,
Man vainly trusts his own.

But oars alone can ne'er prevail
To reach the distant coast ;
The breath of Heaven must swell the sail,
Or all the toil is lost.

THE MODERN PATRIOT.

REBELLION is my theme all day ;
 I only wish 'twould come
 (As who knows but perhaps it may ?)
 A little nearer home.

Yon roaring boys, who rave and fight
 On t'other side the Atlantic,
 I always held them in the right,
 But most so when most frantic.

When lawless mobs insult the court,
 That man shall be my toast,
 If breaking windows be the sport,
 Who bravely breaks the most.

But O ! for him my fancy culls
 The choicest flowers she bears,
 Who constitutionally pulls
 Your house about your ears.

Such civil broils are my delight,
 Though some folks can't endure them,
 Who say the mob are mad outright,
 And that a rope must cure them.

A rope ! I wish we patriots had
 Such strings for all who need 'em—
 What ! hang a man for going mad !
 Then farewell British freedom.

ON THE
 BURNING OF LORD MANSFIELD'S LIBRARY,
 TOGETHER WITH HIS MSS. BY THE MOB, IN THE
 MONTH OF JUNE, 1780.

So then—the Vandals of our isle,
 Sworn foes to sense and law,
 Have burnt to dust a nobler pile
 Than ever Roman saw !

And Murray sighs o'er Pope and Swift,
 And many a treasure more,
 The well judged purchase, and the gift
 That graced his letter'd store.

Their pages mangled, burnt, and torn,
 The loss was his alone ;
 But ages yet to come shall mourn
 The burning of his own.

ON THE SAME.

WHEN wit and genius meet their doom
 In all devouring flame,
 They tell us of the fate of Rome,
 And bid us fear the same.

O'er Murray's loss the muses wept,
They felt the rude alarm,
Yet bless'd the guardian care that kept
His sacred head from harm.

There Memory, like the bee that's fed
From Flora's balmy store,
The quintessence of all he read
Had treasured up before.

The lawless herd, with fury blind,
Have done him cruel wrong ;
The flowers are gone—but still we find
The honey on his tongue.

THE LOVE OF THE WORLD REPROVED ;

OR, HYPOCRISY DETECTED.*

THUS says the prophet of the Turk,
Good mussulman, abstain from pork ;
There is a part in every swine
No friend or follower of mine

* It may be proper to inform the reader that this piece has already appeared in print, having found its way, though with some unnecessary additions by an unknown hand, into the Leeds Journal, without the author's privity.

May taste, whate'er his inclination,
On pain of excommunication.
Such Mahomet's mysterious charge,
And thus he left the point at large.
Had he the sinful part express'd,
They might with safety eat the rest ;
But for one piece they thought it hard
From the whole hog to be debarr'd ;
And set their wit at work to find
What joint the prophet had in mind.
Much controversy straight arose,
These choose the back, the belly those ;
By some 'tis confidently said
He meant not to forbid the head ;
While others at that doctrine rail,
And piously prefer the tail.
Thus, conscience freed from every clog,
Mahometans eat up the hog.

You laugh—'tis well—the tale applied
May make you laugh on t'other side.
Renounce the world—the preacher cries.
We do—a multitude replies.
While one as innocent regards
A snug and friendly game at cards ;
And one, whatever you may say,
Can see no evil in a play ;
Some love a concert, or a race ;
And others shooting, and the chase.
Reviled and loved, renounced and follow'd,
Thus, bit by bit, the world is swallow'd ;

Each thinks his neighbour makes too free,
Yet likes a slice as well as he :
With sophistry their sauce they sweeten,
Till quite from tail to snout 'tis eaten.

ON THE DEATH OF MRS. (NOW LADY)
THROCKMORTON'S BULLFINCH.

YE nymphs ! if e'er your eyes were red
With tears o'er hapless favourites shed,
O share Maria's grief !
Her favourite, even in his cage,
(What will not hunger's cruel rage ?)
Assassin'd by a thief.

Where Rhenus strays his vines among,
The egg was laid from which he sprung ;
And, though by nature mute,
Or only with a whistle blest,
Well taught he all the sounds express'd
Of flagelet or flute.

The honours of his ebon poll
Were brighter than the sleekest mole,
His bosom of the hue
With which Aurora decks the skies,
When piping winds shall soon arise,
To sweep away the dew.

Above, below, in all the house,
Dire foe alike of bird and mouse,
 No cat had leave to dwell;
And Bully's cage supported stood
On props of smoothest shaven wood,
 Large built and latticed well.

Well latticed—but the grate, alas;
Not rough with wire of steel or brass,
 For Bully's plumage sake,
But smooth with wands from Ouse's side,
With which, when neatly peel'd and dried,
 The swains their baskets make.

Night veil'd the pole: all seem'd secure:
When, led by instinct sharp and sure,
 Subsistence to provide,
A beast forth sallied on the scout,
Long back'd, long tail'd, with whisker'd snout,
 And badger-colour'd hide.

He, entering at the study door,
Its ample area 'gan explore;
 And something in the wind
Conjectured, sniffing round and round,
Better than all the books he found,
 Food chiefly for the mind.

Just then, by adverse fate impress'd,
A dream disturb'd poor Bully's rest;
 In sleep he seem'd to view

A rat fast clinging to the cage,
And, screaming at the sad presage,
Awoke and found it true.

For, aided both by ear and scent,
Right to his mark the monster went—
Ah, muse! forbear to speak
Minute the horrors that ensued;
His teeth were strong, the cage was wood—
He left poor Bully's beak.

O had he made that too his prey;
That beak, whence issued many a lay
Of such mellifluous tone,
Might have repaid him well, I wote,
For silencing so sweet a throat,
Fast stuck within his own.

Maria weeps—the Muses mourn—
So when, by Bacchanalians torn,
On Thracian Hebrus' side
The tree-enchanted Orpheus fell,
His head alone remain'd to tell
The cruel death he died.

THE ROSE.

THE rose had been wash'd, just wash'd in a shower,
Which Mary to Anna convey'd,
The plentiful moisture encumber'd the flower,
And weigh'd down its beautiful head.

The cup was all fill'd, and the leaves were all wet,
And it seem'd to a fanciful view
To weep for the buds it had left, with regret,
On the flourishing bush where it grew.

I hastily seized it, unfit as it was
For a nosegay, so dripping and drown'd,
And swinging it rudely, too rudely, alas!
I snapp'd it, it fell to the ground.

And such, I exclaim'd, is the pitiless part
Some act by the delicate mind,
Regardless of wringing and breaking a heart
Already to sorrow resign'd.

This elegant rose, had I shaken it less,
Might have bloom'd with its owner a while;
And the tear, that is wiped with a little address,
May be follow'd perhaps by a smile.

THE DOVES.

REASONING at every step he treads,
Man yet mistakes his way,
While meaner things, whom instinct leads,
Are rarely known to stray.

One silent eve I wander'd late,
And heard the voice of love ;
The turtle thus address'd her mate,
And soothed the listening dove :

Our mutual bond of faith and truth
No time shall disengage,
Those blessings of our early youth
Shall cheer our latest age :

While innocence without disguise
And constancy sincere,
Shall fill the circles of those eyes,
And mine can read them there ;

Those ills, that wait on all below,
Shall ne'er be felt by me,
Or gently felt, and only so,
As being shared with thee.

When lightnings flash among the trees,
Or kites are hovering near,
I fear lest thee alone they seize,
And know no other fear.

'Tis then I feel myself a wife,
And press thy wedded side,
Resolved a union form'd for life
Death never shall divide.

But oh! if, fickle and unchaste,
(Forgive a transient thought)
Thou couldst become unkind at last,
And scorn thy present lot,

No need of lightnings from on high,
Or kites with cruel beak ;
Denied the endearments of thine eye,
This widow'd heart would break.

Thus sang the sweet sequester'd bird,
Soft as the passing wind,
And I recorded what I heard,
A lesson for mankind.

A FABLE.

A RAVEN, while with glossy breast
 Her new laid eggs she fondly press'd,
 And, on her wickerwork high mounted,
 Her chickens prematurely counted,
 (A fault philosophers might blame
 If quite exempted from the same)
 Enjoy'd at ease the genial day ;
 'Twas April, as the bumpkins say,
 The legislature call'd it May.
 But suddenly a wind, as high
 As ever swept a winter sky,
 Shook the young leaves about her ears,
 And fill'd her with a thousand fears,
 Lest the rude blast should snap the bough,
 And spread her golden hopes below.
 But just at eve the blowing weather
 And all her fears were hush'd together :
 And now, quoth poor unthinking Ralph,
 'Tis over, and the brood is safe ;
 (For ravens, though, as birds of omen,
 They teach both conjurers and old women
 To tell us what is to befall,
 Can't prophesy themselves at all.)
 The morning came, when neighbour Hodge,
 Who long had mark'd her airy lodge,

And destined all the treasure there
A gift to his expecting fair,
Climb'd like a squirrel to his dray,
And bore the worthless prize away.

MORAL.

'Tis Providence alone secures
In every change both mine and yours :
Safety consists not in escape
From dangers of a frightful shape ;
An earthquake may be bid to spare
The man that's strangled by a hair.
Fate steals along with silent tread,
Found ofttest in what least we dread,
Frowns in the storm with angry brow,
But in the sunshine strikes the blow.

ODE TO APOLLO.

ON AN INKGLASS ALMOST DRIED IN THE SUN.

PATRON of all those luckless brains,
That, to the wrong side leaning,
Indite much metre with much pains,
And little or no meaning.

Ah why, since oceans, rivers, streams,
That water all the nations,
Pay tribute to thy glorious beams,
In constant exhalations.

Why, stooping from the noon of day,
Too covetous of drink,
Apollo, hast thou stolen away
A poet's drop of ink?

Upborne into the viewless air,
It floats a vapour now,
Impell'd through regions dense and rare
By all the winds that blow.

Ordain'd perhaps ere summer flies,
Combined with millions more,
To form an iris in the skies,
Though black and foul before.

Illustrious drop! and happy then
Beyond the happiest lot,
Of all that ever pass'd my pen,
So soon to be forgot!

Phœbus, if such be thy design,
To place it in thy bow,
Give wit, that what is left may shine
With equal grace below.

A COMPARISON.

THE lapse of time and rivers is the same,
 Both speed their journey with a restless stream ;
 The silent pace, with which they steal away,
 No wealth can bribe, no prayers persuade to stay
 Alike irrevocable both when past,
 And a wide ocean swallows both at last.
 Though each resemble each in every part,
 A difference strikes at length the musing heart ;
 Streams never flow in vain ; where streams abound
 How laughs the land with various plenty crown'd
 But time, that should enrich the nobler mind,
 Neglected leaves a dreary waste behind.

ANOTHER.

ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG LADY.

SWEET stream, that winds through yonder glade
 Apt emblem of a virtuous maid—
 Silent and chaste she steals along,
 Far from the world's gay busy throng ;
 With gentle yet prevailing force,
 Intent upon her destined course ;
 Graceful and useful all she does,
 Blessing and blest where'er she goes,
 Pure bosom'd as that watery glass,
 And heaven reflected in her face.

THE POET'S NEW YEAR'S GIFT.

TO MRS. (NOW LADY) THROCKMORTON.

MARIA ! I have every good
 For thee wish'd many a time,
 Both sad, and in a cheerful mood,
 But never yet in rhyme.

To wish thee fairer is no need,
 More prudent, or more sprightly,
 Or more ingenious, or more freed
 From temper flaws unsightly.

What favour then not yet possess'd
 Can I for thee require,
 In wedded love already blest,
 To thy whole heart's desire ?

None here is happy but in part :
 Full bliss is bliss divine ;
 There dwells some wish in every heart,
 And doubtless one in thine.

That wish on some fair future day,
 Which fate shall brightly gild,
 ('Tis blameless, be it what it may)
 I wish it all fulfill'd.

PAIRING TIME ANTICIPATED.

A FABLE.

I SHALL not ask Jean Jaques Rousseau*
 If birds confabulate or no ;
 'Tis clear, that they were always able
 To hold discourse, at least in fable ;
 And e'en the child who knows no better
 Than to interpret, by the letter,
 A story of a cock and bull,
 Must have a most uncommon skull.

It chanced then on a winter's day,
 But warm, and bright, and calm as May,
 The birds, conceiving a design
 To forestal sweet St. Valentine,
 In many an orchard, copse, and grove,
 Assembled on affairs of love,
 And with much twitter and much chatter
 Began to agitate the matter.
 At length a Bullfinch, who could boast
 More years and wisdom than the most,

* It was one of the whimsical speculations of this philosopher, that all fables, which ascribe reason and speech to animals, should be withheld from children, as being only vehicles of deception. But what child was ever deceived by them, or can be, against the evidence of his senses ?

Entreated, opening wide his beak,
A moment's liberty to speak ;
And, silence publicly enjoin'd,
Deliver'd briefly thus his mind :

My friends ! be cautious how ye treat
The subject upon which we meet ;
I fear we shall have winter yet.

A Finch, whose tongue knew no control,
With golden wing and satin poll,
A last year's bird, who ne'er had tried
What marriage means, thus pert replied :

Methinks the gentleman, quoth she,
Opposite in the apple tree,
By his good will would keep us single
Till yonder heaven and earth shall mingle,
Or (which is likelier to befall)
Till death exterminate us all.

I marry without more ado,
My dear Dick Redcap, what say you ?

Dick heard, and tweedling, ogling, bridling,
Turning short round, strutting and sideling,
Attested, glad, his approbation
Of an immediate conjugation.

Their sentiments so well express'd
Influenced mightily the rest,
All pair'd, and each pair built a nest.

But though the birds were thus in haste,
The leaves came on not quite so fast,
And destiny, that sometimes bears

An aspect stern on man's affairs,
Not altogether smiled on theirs.
The wind, of late breathed gently forth,
Now shifted east, and east by north ;
Bare trees and shrubs but ill, you know,
Could shelter them from rain or snow,
Stepping into their nests, they paddled,
Themselves were chill'd, their eggs were addled ;
Soon every father bird and mother
Grew quarrelsome, and peck'd each other.
Parted without the least regret,
Except that they had ever met,
And learn'd in future to be wiser,
Than to neglect a good adviser.

MORAL.

Misses! the tale that I relate
This lesson seems to carry—
Choose not alone a proper mate,
But proper time to marry.

THE DOG AND THE WATER LILY.

NO FABLE.

THE noon was shady, and soft airs
 Swept Ouse's silent tide,
 When, 'scaped from literary cares,
 I wander'd on his side.

My spaniel, prettiest of his race,
 And high in pedigree,
 (Two nymphs* adorn'd with every grace
 That spaniel found for me)

Now wanton'd lost in flags and reeds,
 Now starting into sight,
 Pursued the swallow o'er the meads
 With scarce a slower flight.

It was the time when Ouse display'd
 His lilies newly blown ;
 Their beauties I intent survey'd,
 And one I wish'd my own.

With cane extended far I sought
 To steer it close to land ;
 But still the prize, though nearly caught,
 Escaped my eager hand.

* Sir Robert Gunning's daughters.

Beau mark'd my unsuccessful pains
With fix'd considerate face,
And puzzling set his puppy brains
To comprehend the case.

But with a cherup clear and strong
Dispersing all his dream,
I thence withdrew, and follow'd long
The windings of the stream.

My ramble ended, I return'd ;
Beau, trotting far before,
The floating wreath again discern'd,
And plunging, left the shore.

I saw him with that lily cropp'd
Impatient swim to meet
My quick approach, and soon he dropp'd
The treasure at my feet.

Charm'd with the sight, the world, I cried,
Shall hear of this thy deed :
My dog shall mortify the pride
Of man's superior breed :

But chief myself I will enjoin,
Awake at duty's call,
To show a love as prompt as thine
To Him who gives me all.

THE WINTER NOSEGAY.

WHAT nature, alas ! has denied
 To the delicate growth of our isle,
 Art has in a measure supplied,
 And winter is deck'd with a smile.
 See, Mary, what beauties I bring
 From the shelter of that sunny shed,
 Where the flowers have the charms of the spring,
 Though abroad they are frozen and dead.

'Tis a bower of Arcadian sweets,
 Where Flora is still in her prime,
 A fortress to which she retreats
 From the cruel assaults of the clime.
 While earth wears a mantle of snow,
 These pinks are as fresh and as gay
 As the fairest and sweetest that blow
 On the beautiful bosom of May.

See how they have safely survived
 The frowns of a sky so severe ;
 Such Mary's true love, that has lived
 Through many a turbulent year.
 The charms of the late blowing rose
 Seem'd graced with a livelier hue,
 And the winter of sorrow best shows
 The truth of a friend such as you.

THE POET, THE OYSTER, AND SENSITIVE
PLANT.

AN oyster, cast upon the shore,
Was heard, though never heard before,
Complaining in a speech well worded,
And worthy thus to be recorded—

Ah, hapless wretch ! condemn'd to dwell
For ever in my native shell ;
Ordain'd to move when others please,
Not for my own content or ease ;
But toss'd and buffeted about,
Now in the water and now out.
'Twere better to be born a stone,
Of ruder shape, and feeling none,
Than with a tenderness like mine,
And sensibilities so fine !

I envy that unfeeling shrub,
Fast rooted against every rub.
The plant he meant grew not far off,
And felt the sneer with scorn enough :
Was hurt, disgusted, mortified,
And with asperity replied :

When, cry the botanists, and stare,
Did plants call'd sensitive grow there ?
No matter when—a poet's muse is
To make them grow just where she chooses.

You shapeless nothing in a dish,
You that are but almost a fish,

I scorn your course insinuation,
And have most plentiful occasion
To wish myself the rock I view,
Or such another dolt as you :
For many a grave and learned clerk,
And many a gay unletter'd spark,
With curious touch examines me,
If I can feel as well as he ;
And when I bend, retire, and shrink,
Says—Well, 'tis more than one would think !
Thus life is spent (oh fie upon't !)
In being touch'd, and crying—Don't !

A poet, in his evening walk,
O'erheard and check'd this idle talk.
And your fine sense, he said, and yours,
Whatever evil it endures,
Deserves not, if so soon offended,
Much to be pitied or commended.
Disputes, though short, are far too long,
Where both alike are in the wrong ;
Your feelings in their full amount
Are all upon your own account.

You, in your grotto-work enclosed,
Complain of being thus exposed ;
Yet nothing feel in that rough coat
Save when the knife is at your throat,
Wherever driven by wind or tide,
Exempt from every ill beside.

And as for you, my Lady Squeamish,
Who reckon every touch a blemish,

If all the plants, that can be found
Embellishing the scene around,
Should droop and wither where they grow,
You would not feel at all—not you.
The noblest minds their virtue prove
By pity, sympathy, and love :
These, these are feelings truly fine,
And prove their owner half divine.

His censure reach'd them as he dealt it,
And each by shrinking show'd he felt it.

THE SHRUBBERY.

WRITTEN IN A TIME OF AFFLICTION.

OH, happy shades—to me unblest !
Friendly to peace, but not to me !
How ill the scene that offers rest,
And heart, that cannot rest, agree !

This glassy stream, that spreading pine,
Those alders quivering to the breeze,
Might soothe a soul less hurt than mine,
And please, if any thing could please.

But fix'd unalterable care
Forgoes not what she feels within,
Shows the same sadness every where,
And slights the season and the scene.

For all that pleased in wood or lawn,
While peace possess'd these silent bowers,
Her animating smile withdrawn,
Has lost its beauties and its powers.

The saint or moralist should tread
This moss-grown alley musing, slow ;
They seek like me the secret shade,
But not like me to nourish woe !

Me fruitful scenes and prospects waste
Alike admonish not to roam ;
These tell me of enjoyments past,
And those of sorrows yet to come.

MUTUAL FORBEARANCE

NECESSARY TO THE HAPPINESS OF THE MARRIED STATE.

THE lady thus address'd her spouse—
What a mere dungeon is this house !
By no means large enough ; and was it,
Yet this dull room, and that dark closet,
Those hangings with their worn out graces,
Long beards, long noses, and pale faces,
Are such an antiquated scene,
They overwhelm me with the spleen.

Sir Humphrey, shooting in the dark,
Makes answer quite beside the mark :
No doubt, my dear, I bade him come,
Engaged myself to be at home,
And shall expect him at the door
Precisely when the clock strikes four.

You are so deaf, the lady cried,
(And raised her voice, and frown'd beside)
You are so sadly deaf, my dear,
What shall I do to make you hear ?

Dismiss poor Harry ! he replies ;
Some people are more nice than wise,
For one slight trespass all this stir ?
What if he did ride whip and spur,
'Twas but a mile—your favourite horse
Will never look one hair the worse.

Well, I protest 'tis past all bearing—
Child ! I am rather hard of hearing—
Yes, truly—one must scream and bawl :
I tell you, you can't hear at all !
Then, with a voice exceeding low,
No matter if you hear or no.

Alas ! and is domestic strife,
That sorest ill of human life,
A plague so little to be fear'd,
As to be wantonly incurr'd,
To gratify a fretful passion,
On every trivial provocation ?
The kindest and the happiest pair
Will find occasion to forbear ;

And something every day they live
To pity, and perhaps forgive.
But if infirmities, that fall
In common to the lot of all,
A blemish or a sense impair'd,
Are crimes so little to be spared,
Then farewell all that must create
The comfort of the wedded state ;
Instead of harmony, 'tis jar,
And tumult, and intestine war.

The love that cheers life's latest stage,
Proof against sickness and old age,
Preserved by virtue from declension,
Becomes not weary of attention ;
But lives, when that exterior grace,
Which first inspired the flame, decays.
'Tis gentle, delicate, and kind,
To faults compassionate or blind,
And will with sympathy endure
Those evils it would gladly cure :
But angry, coarse, and harsh expression
Shows love to be a mere profession ;
Proves that the heart is none of his,
Or soon expels him if it is.

THE NEGRO'S COMPLAINT.

FORCED from home and all its pleasures,
 Afric's coast I left forlorn ;
 To increase a stranger's treasures,
 O'er the raging billows borne.
 Men from England bought and sold me,
 Paid my price in paltry gold ;
 But, though slave they have enroll'd me,
 Minds are never to be sold.

Still in thought as free as ever,
 What are England's rights, I ask,
 Me from my delights to sever,
 Me to torture, me to task ?
 Fleecy locks and black complexion
 Cannot forfeit nature's claim ;
 Skins may differ, but affection
 Dwells in white and black the same.

Why did all-creating nature
 Make the plant for which we toil ?
 Sighs must fan it, tears must water,
 Sweat of ours must dress the soil.
 Think, ye masters iron-hearted,
 Lolling at your jovial boards,
 Think how many backs have smarted
 For the sweets your cane affords.

Is there, as ye sometimes tell us,
Is there one who reigns on high ?
Has he bid you buy and sell us,
Speaking from his throne the sky ?
Ask him, if your knotted scourges,
Matches, blood-extorting screws,
Are the means that duty urges
Agents of his will to use ?

Hark ! he answers—wild tornadoes,
Strewing yonder sea with wrecks ;
Wasting towns, plantations, meadows,
Are the voice with which he speaks.
He, foreseeing what vexations
Afric's sons should undergo,
Fix'd their tyrants' habitations
Where his whirlwinds answer—no.

By our blood in Afric wasted,
Ere our necks received the chain ;
By the miseries that we tasted,
Crossing in your barks the main ;
By our sufferings, since ye brought us
To the man-degrading mart ;
All sustain'd by patience, taught us
Only by a broken heart ;

Deem our nation brutes no longer,
Till some reason ye shall find
Worthier of regard, and stronger
Than the colour of our kind.

Slaves of gold, whose sordid dealings
Tarnish all your boasted powers,
Prove that you have human feelings,
Ere you proudly question ours !

PITY FOR POOR AFRICANS.

Video meliora proboque,
Deteriora sequor.

I own I am shock'd at the purchase of slaves,
And fear those, who buy them and sell them, are
 knaves ; [groans,
What I hear of their hardships, their tortures, and
Is almost enough to draw pity from stones.

I pity them greatly, but I must be mum,
For how could we do without sugar and rum ?
Especially sugar, so needful we see ?
What, give up our desserts, our coffee, and tea !

Besides, if we do, the French, Dutch, and Danes
Will heartily thank us, no doubt, for our pains ;
If we do not buy the poor creatures, they will,
And tortures and groans will be multiplied still.

If foreigners likewise would give up the trade,
Much more in behalf of your wish might be said ;
But, while they get riches by purchasing blacks,
Pray tell me why we may not also go snacks ?

Your scruples and arguments bring to my mind
A story so pat, you may think it is coin'd,
On purpose to answer you, out of my mint;
But I can assure you I saw it in print.

A youngster at school, more sedate than the rest,
Had once his integrity put to the test;
His comrades had plotted an orchard to rob,
And ask'd him to go and assist in the job.

He was shock'd, sir, like you, and answer'd—
“ Oh no ! [don't go ;
What ! rob our good neighbour ! I pray you
Besides the man's poor, his orchard's his bread,
Then think of his children, for they must be fed.”

“ You speak very fine, and you look very grave,
But apples we want, and apples we'll have ;
If you will go with us, you shall have a share,
If not, you shall have neither apple nor pear.”

They spoke, and Tom ponder'd—“ I see they
will go :
Poor man ! what a pity to injure him so !
Poor man ! I would save him his fruit if I could,
But staying behind will do him no good.

“ If the matter depended alone upon me, [tree ;
His apples might hang till they dropp'd from the
But since they will take them, I think I'll go too,
He will loose none by me, though I get a few.”

His scruples thus silenced, Tom felt more at ease,
And went with his comrades the apples to seize ;
He blamed and protested, but join'd in the plan :
He shared in the plunder, but pitied the man.

THE MORNING DREAM.

'Twas in the glad season of spring,
Asleep at the dawn of the day,
I dream'd what I cannot but sing,
So pleasant it seem'd as I lay.
I dream'd that, on ocean afloat,
Far hence to the westward I sail'd,
While the billows high lifted the boat,
And the fresh blowing breeze never fail'd.

In the steerage a woman I saw,
Such at least was the form that she wore,
Whose beauty impress'd me with awe,
Ne'er taught me by woman before.
She sat, and a shield at her side
Shed light, like a sun on the waves,
And smiling divinely, she cried—
“ I go to make freemen of slaves.”

Then raising her voice to a strain
The sweetest that ear ever heard,
She sung of the slave's broken chain,
Wherever her glory appear'd.

Some clouds, which had over us hung,
Fled, chased by her melody clear,
And methought while she liberty sung,
'Twas liberty only to hear.

Thus swiftly dividing the flood,
To a slave-cultured island we came,
Where a demon, her enemy, stood—
Oppression his terrible name.
In his hand, as the sign of his sway,
A scourge hung with lashes he bore,
And stood looking out for his prey
From Africa's sorrowful shore.

But soon as approaching the land,
That goddesslike woman he view'd,
The scourge he let fall from his hand,
With blood of his subjects imbrued.
I saw him both sicken and die,
And the moment the monster expired,
Heard shouts, that ascended the sky,
From thousands with rapture inspired.

Awaking, how could I but muse
At what such a dream should betide ?
But soon my ear caught the glad news,
Which served my weak thought for a guide ;
That Britannia, renown'd o'er the waves
For the hatred she ever has shown
To the black-sceptred rulers of slaves,
Resolves to have none of her own.

THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF
JOHN GILPIN.

Showing how he went farther than he intended, and came
safe home again.

JOHN GILPIN was a citizen
Of credit and renown,
A trainband captain eke was he
Of famous London town.

John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear,
Though wedded we have been
These twice ten tedious years, yet we
No holiday have seen.

To-morrow is our wedding day,
And we will then repair
Unto the Bell at Edmonton
All in a chaise and pair.

My sister, and my sister's child,
Myself, and children three,
Will fill the chaise ; so you must ride
On horseback after we.

He soon replied, I do admire
Of womankind but one,
And you are she, my dearest dear,
Therefore it shall be done.

I am a linendraper bold,
As all the world doth know,
And my good friend the calender
Will lend his horse to go.

Quoth Mrs. Gilpin, that's well said ;
And for that wine is dear,
We will be furnish'd with our own,
Which is both bright and clear.

John Gilpin kiss'd his loving wife ;
O'erjoy'd was he to find,
That, though on pleasure she was bent,
She had a frugal mind.

The morning came, the chaise was brought,
But yet was not allow'd
To drive up to the door, lest all
Should say that she was proud.

So three doors off the chaise was stay'd,
Where they did all get in ;
Six precious souls, and all agog
To dash through thick and thin.

Smack went the whip, round went the wheels,
Were never folk so glad,
The stones did rattle underneath,
As if Cheapside were mad.

John Gilpin at his horse's side
Seized fast the flowing mane,
And up he got, in haste to ride,
But soon came down again ;

For saddletree scarce reach'd had he,
His journey to begin,
When, turning round his head, he saw
Three customers come in.

So down he came ; for loss of time,
Although it grieved him sore,
Yet loss of pence, full well he knew,
Would trouble him much more.

'Twas long before the customers
Were suited to their mind,
When Betty screaming came down stairs,
“ The wine is left behind !”

Good lack ! quoth he—yet bring it me,
My leathern belt likewise,
In which I bear my trusty sword
When I do exercise.

Now mistress Gilpin (careful soul !)
Had two stone bottles found,
To hold the liquor that she loved,
And keep it safe and sound.

Each bottle had a curling ear,
Through which the belt he drew,
And hung a bottle on each side,
To make his balance true.

Then over all, that he might be
Equipp'd from top to toe,
His long red cloak, well brush'd and neat,
He manfully did throw.

Now see him mounted once again
Upon his nimble steed,
Full slowly pacing o'er the stones,
With caution and good heed.

But finding soon a smoother road
Beneath his well shod feet,
The snorting beast began to trot,
Which gall'd him in his seat.

So, fair and softly, John he cried,
But John he cried in vain ;
That trot became a gallop soon,
In spite of curb and rein.

So stooping down, as needs he must
Who cannot sit upright,
He grasp'd the mane with both his hands,
And eke with all his might.

His horse, who never in that sort
Had handled been before,
What thing upon his back had got
Did wonder more and more.

Away went Gilpin, neck or nought ;
Away went hat and wig ;
He little dreamt, when he set out,
Of running such a rig.

The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,
Like streamer long and gay,
Till, loop and button failing both,
At last it flew away.

Then might all people well discern
The bottles he had slung ;
A bottle swinging at each side,
As hath been said or sung.

The dogs did bark, the children scream'd,
Up flew the windows all ;
And every soul cried out, Well done !
As loud as he could bawl.

Away went Gilpin—who but he ?
His fame soon spread around,
He carries weight ! he rides a race !
'Tis for a thousand pound !

And still, as fast as he drew near,
'Twas wonderful to view,
How in a trice the turnpike men
Their gates wide open threw.

And now, as he went bowing down
His reeking head full low,
The bottles twain behind his back
Were shatter'd at a blow.

Down ran the wine into the road,
Most piteous to be seen,
Which made his horse's flanks to smoke
As they had basted been.

But still he seem'd to carry weight,
With leathern girdle braced ;
For all might see the bottle necks
Still dangling at his waist.

Thus all through merry Islington
These gambols he did play,
Until he came unto the Wash
Of Edmonton so gay ;

And there he threw the wash about
On both sides of the way,
Just like unto a trundling mop,
Or a wild goose at play.

At Edmonton his loving wife
From the balcony spied
Her tender husband, wondering much
To see how he did ride.

Stop, stop, John Gilpin!—Here's the house
They all at once did cry ;
The dinner waits, and we are tired :
Said Gilpin—So am I !

But yet his horse was not a whit
Inclined to tarry there ;
For why ?—his owner had a house
Full ten miles off, at Ware.

So like an arrow swift he flew,
Shot by an archer strong ;
So did he fly—which brings me to
The middle of my song.

Away went Gilpin out of breath,
And sore against his will,
Till at his friend the calender's
His horse at last stood still.

The calender, amazed to see
His neighbour in such trim,
Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,
And thus accosted him :

What news? what news? your tidings tell;
Tell me you must and shall—
Say why bareheaded you are come,
Or why you come at all?

Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit,
And loved a timely joke!
And thus unto the calender
In merry guise he spoke:

I came because your horse would come;
And, if I well forebode,
My hat and wig will soon be here,
They are upon the road.

The calender, right glad to find
His friend in merry pin,
Return'd him not a single word,
But to the house went in;

Whence straight he came with hat and wig;
A wig that flow'd behind,
A hat not much the worse for wear,
Each comely in its kind.

He held them up, and in his turn
Thus show'd his ready wit,
My head is twice as big as yours,
They therefore needs must fit.

But let me scrape the dirt away
That hangs upon your face ;
And stop and eat, for well you may
Be in a hungry case.

Said John, it is my wedding day,
And all the world would stare,
If wife should dine at Edmonton,
And I should dine at Ware.

So turning to his horse, he said,
I am in haste to dine ;
'Twas for your pleasure you came here,
You shall go back for mine.

Ah luckless speech, and bootless boast !
For which he paid full dear ;
For, while he spake, a braying ass
Did sing most loud and clear ;

Whereat his horse did snort, as he
Had heard a lion roar,
And gallop'd off with all his might,
As he had done before.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went Gilpin's hat and wig :
He lost them sooner than at first,
For why ?—they were too big.

Now mistress Gilpin, when she saw
Her husband posting down
Into the country far away,
She pull'd out half a crown ;

And thus unto the youth she said,
That drove them to the Bell,
This shall be yours, when you bring back
My husband safe and well.

The youth did ride, and soon did meet
John coming back amain ;
Whom in a trice he tried to stop,
By catching at his rein ;

But not performing what he meant,
And gladly would have done,
The frightened steed he frightened more,
And made him faster run.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went postboy at his heels,
The postboy's horse right glad to miss
The lumbering of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road,
Thus seeing Gilpin fly,
With postboy scampering in the rear,
They raised the hue and cry :—

Stop thief ! stop thief !—a highwayman !
Not one of them was mute ;
And all and each that pass'd that way
Did join in the pursuit.

And now the turnpike gates again
Flew open in short space ;
The toll-men thinking as before,
That Gilpin rode a race.

And so he did, and won it too,
For he got first to town ;
Nor stopp'd till where he had got up
He did again get down.

Now let us sing, long live the king,
And Gilpin long live he ;
And when he next doth ride abroad,
May I be there to see !

THE NIGHTINGALE AND GLOWWORM.

A NIGHTINGALE, that all day long
 Had cheer'd the village with his song,
 Nor yet at eve his note suspended,
 Nor yet when eventide was ended,
 Began to feel, as well he might,
 The keen demands of appetite ;
 When, looking eagerly around,
 He spied far off, upon the ground,
 A something shining in the dark,
 And knew the glowworm by his spark ;
 So stooping down from hawthorn top,
 He thought to put him in his crop.
 The worm, aware of his intent,
 Harangued him thus, right eloquent—

Did you admire my lamp, quoth he,
 As much as I your minstrelsy,
 You would abhor to do me wrong
 As much as I to spoil your song ;
 For 'twas the selfsame power divine
 Taught you to sing, and me to shine ;
 That you with music, I with light
 Might beautify and cheer the night.
 The songster heard his short oration,
 And warbling out his approbation,
 Released him, as my story tells,
 And found a supper somewhere else.

Hence jarring sectaries may learn
Their real interest to discern ;
That brother should not war with brother,
And worry and devour each other ;
But sing and shine by sweet consent,
Till life's poor transient night is spent,
Respecting in each other's case
The gifts of nature and of grace.

Those Christians best deserve the name
Who studiously make peace their aim ;
Peace both the duty and the prize
Of him that creeps and him that flies.

AN EPISTLE TO AN AFFLICTED PROTESTANT
LADY IN FRANCE.

MADAM,

A STRANGER's purpose in these lays
Is to congratulate, and not to praise.
To give the creature the Creator's due
Were sin in me, and an offence to you.
From man to man, or e'en to woman paid,
Praise is the medium of a knavish trade,
A coin by craft for folly's use design'd,
Spurious, and only current with the blind.

The path of sorrow, and that path alone,
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown;
No traveller ever reach'd that blest abode,
Who found not thorns and briers in his road.
The world may dance along the flowery plain,
Cheer'd as they go by many a sprightly strain,
Where nature has her mossy velvet spread,
With unshod feet they yet securely tread,
Admonish'd, scorn the caution and the friend,
Bent all on pleasure, heedless of its end.
But he, who knew what human hearts would prove,
How slow to learn the dictates of his love,
That, hard by nature and of stubborn will,
A life of ease would make them harder still,

In pity to the souls his grace design'd
To rescue from the ruins of mankind,
Call'd for a cloud to darken all their years,
And said, " Go, spend them in the vale of tears.'
O balmy gales of soul-reviving air !
O salutary streams, that murmur there !
These flowing from the fount of grace above,
Those breathed from lips of everlasting love.
The flinty soil indeed their feet annoys ;
Chill blasts of trouble nip their springing joys ;
An envious world will interpose its frown,
To mar delights superior to its own ;
And many a pang, experienced still within,
Reminds them of their hated inmate, Sin :
But ills of every shape and every name,
Transform'd to blessings, miss their cruel aim ;
And every moment's calm, that soothes the breast
Is given in earnest of eternal rest.

Ah, be not sad, although thy lot be cast
Far from the flock, and in a boundless waste !
No shepherd's tents within thy view appear,
But the chief shepherd even there is near ;
Thy tender sorrows and thy plaintive strain
Flow in a foreign land, but not in vain ;
Thy tears all issue from a source divine,
And every drop bespeaks a Saviour thine—
So once in Gideon's fleece the dews were found,
And drought on all the drooping herbs around.

TO THE REV. W. CAWTHORNE UNWIN.

UNWIN, I should but ill repay
 The kindness of a friend,
 Whose worth deserves as warm a lay,
 As ever friendship penn'd,
 Thy name omitted in a page,
 That would reclaim a vicious age.

A union form'd, as mine with thee,
 Not rashly, or in sport,
 May be as fervent in degree,
 And faithful in its sort,
 And may as rich in comfort prove,
 As that of true fraternal love.

The bud inserted in the rind,
 The bud of peach or rose,
 Adorns, though differing in its kind,
 The stock whereon it grows,
 With flower as sweet, or fruit as fair,
 As if produced by nature there.

Not rich, I render what I may,
 I seize thy name in haste,
 And place it in this first essay,
 Lest this should prove the last.
 'Tis where it should be—in a plan,
 That holds in view the good of man.

The poet's lyre, to fix his fame,
Should be the poet's heart ;
Affection lights a brighter flame
Than ever blazed by art.
No muses on these lines attend,
I sink the poet in the friend.

END OF VOL. I.

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